Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Sri Lanka:

A Situational Analysis on Welfare Service Delivery

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Declaration

I, Mohamad Safras Asis, hereby certify that this dissertation entitled "Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Sri Lanka: A Situational Analysis on Welfare Service Delivery" is the outcome of my own study undertaken under the guidance of Mrs. Ishari Gunarathne, lecturer, School of Social Work, National Institute of Social Development. This research project does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for any Degree, Diploma, or Certificate of any university or any other institution of higher learning. It does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except due reference is made in the text. I have duly acknowledged all the sources used by me in the preparation of this dissertation.

M. Safras Asis

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Abstract

Refugees and Asylum seekers (RAS) in Sri Lanka face many difficulties in meeting their basic needs such as food, health, education, housing and employment etc., as they are not legally allowed to work in Sri Lanka. Despite of poverty and social, economic deprivation, RAS are not entitled to public welfare benefits, except for health. They are mainly dependent on the limited services provided by UNHCR and few NGOs and received less attention of Sri Lankan social workers and the state. Therefore this study explored the situation of refugees from a Social work Perspective analysing current provisions of social services and welfare, and challenges faced by RAS and their service providers. It is a qualitative research that uses Key Informant Interviews (KII) for data collection. Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP), Social Systems theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs constitute its theoretical framework. RAS living in Sri Lanka face various difficulties including legal, economic and socio-cultural barriers. The study found how welfare needs are connected with each other, how economic needs impact on psycho-social and other aspects of their lives and how scarcity of resources impact and restrict their everyday lives. It also mapped the current service provisions provided to RAS and challenges faced by the service delivery organizations. It discusses the legal, policy and right based concerns such as right to employment which require attention of the policy makers, and social work advocacy. The study highlights the importance of rights-based approach to address the needs of RAS, and identifies many social work opportunities to work with RAS community.

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List of abbreviations

AOP	Anti-Oppressive Practice
EPF	Employees' Provident Fund
ETF	Employees' Trust Fund
GN	Grama Niladari (Village Officer)
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KI / KII	Key Informant/ Key Informant Interviews
LST	Law and Society Trust
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
RAS	Refugees and Asylum Seekers
TA	Thematic Analysis
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USCRI	United States Committee of Refugees and Immigrants
WHO	World Health organization

1. Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to this study. It describes the background and also explains the rationale, objectives, research questions, Key terms major concepts and theories used and relationship with Social work subject and the research. First the introduction to the research topic, and its background of the study are explained. Then the rationale for this study, its importance are described and the main aims and objectives of the research are clarified. Then research problem is presented; the key terms, and theories used in this study are explained. The chapter also clarifies how the study area connects with the field of social work.

1.1. Background of the study

Sri Lanka has seen a large influx of people from various countries seeking protection in the recent past. This cohort includes asylum seekers (awaiting determination of their refugee status) and those who have been granted asylum (refugees) who are awaiting third country resettlement.

The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) does not officially receive refugees in Sri Lanka as Sri Lanka is not a signatory to the 1951 convention on refugees. However, Sri Lanka serves as a temporary location for refugees and asylum seekers (RAS) to wait until the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) decides to grant or reject their asylum application and find them a third country for permanent or long term relocation. UNHCR is the main agency dealing with RAS in Sri Lanka. As per a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the UNHCR and the GoSL in 2006, asylum seekers and refugees accepted in Sri Lanka for this purpose (UNHCR, 2020).

According to UNHCR (UNHCR, 2019) there were 1670 refugees and asylum Seekers (RAS) were in Sri Lanka. About 80% of them are from Pakistan and approximately 12% are from Afghanistan. Approximately another 2% came from Myanmar. Approximately 6% of the rest came from 12 other Asian and African countries. In Sri Lanka, services to refugees are mainly provided through UNHCR and several NGOs. While government is the key welfare provider to the general public in Sri Lanka, their role is unclear and politically debated when it comes to refugee welfare service delivery in Sri Lanka. Also

due to the practical limitations, the limited interviewees from government sector were interviewed.

Currently, at least 70.8 million people worldwide are forced to flee their homes, of which 41.5 million are IDPs and 25.9 million are refugees. Another 3.5 million people are seeking asylum. More than half of the 25.9 million refugees are children under the age of 18. Approximately one new person is joining the ranks of conflict or persecution every two seconds. (UNHCR, 2020b) In the aftermath of World War II, UNHCR was created to help millions of Europeans who have fled or lost their homes. The decision to dissolve the UN High Commission for Refugees was completed in three years, but today, 69 years later, the organization is committed to protecting and supporting refugees around the world. The Refugee Convention of 1951 is their main legal document. It has been ratified by 145 countries and defines the term 'refugee ' which states the rights of the displaced and the legal obligations of states to protect them. The basic principle is non-refoulement. It means that a refugee should not go back to a country where his life or liberty is in serious danger. This is now considered a rule of traditional international law.

1.2. Rationale of the study

There has been a great deal of research on RAS in various countries around the world, in areas such as their nutrition (Bilukha et al., 2014; Hossain et al., 2016) , health (Beiser, 2005; Hollifield et al., 2002), mental health (Watters, 2001; Pumariega, Rothe, & Pumariega, 2005), housing (Phillips, 2006; Fozdar & Hartley, 2014), education (Hek, 2005; Waters & LeBlanc, 2005) and employment (De Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2010; Phillimore & Goodson, 2006).

There is also a lot of research on the field of social work and refugees and asylum seekers (RAS). However, most of these studies have been limited to European, North American and Australian contexts where RAS have been formally recognized under the 1951 refugee convention. Under the convention, these countries accept the refugees to be resettled in their countries and also provide welfare and other facilities to facilitate them in the process. A limited number of researches have been conducted when it comes to non-signatory countries, despite a considerable number of RAS having been in such countries. The RAS in these countries could face significant difficulties due to lack of support from the government and others.

In Sri Lanka, there has been a wide range of research into Sri Lankan refugees in other countries especially about Tamil refugees who fled Sri Lanka in the context of war (Tambiah, 1986). But there is a dearth of systematic research on foreign RAS temporarily staying in Sri Lanka. This lack of research and data has created difficulties for organizations dealing with RAS in Sri Lanka.

The social work with RAS temporarily in Sri Lanka remains a completely unexplored area, except experiences of few individual social workers. There has been very limited discussion on the subject in Sri Lanka. This research will also help to draw attention to this subject which is an area which has not been given much attention by Sri Lankan social workers. It may help social workers to understand the dynamics of the refugee community and their needs, and to build a basic understanding on the needs of the refugee community and to identify social work opportunities in the field. Social workers could utilize the findings of this study in policy and programmatic work, and also help social work professionals to identify social work approaches to work with RAS in Sri Lanka. It is also expected that the results of this study will lead to further studies on refugees in Sri Lanka.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The main Objective of this study is to analyse the situation of refugees in relation to fulfilling their basic needs from a Social work Perspective.

This main objective is further divided into four sub-objectives.

- To identify current provisions of services to refugees.
- To explain the situation faced by organizations and activists working with refugees.
- To explore constraints and challenges faced by refugees.
- To identify the social work interventions with refugees & asylum seekers and to make relevant suggestions and recommendations.

This study identified the current provisions of service delivery to RAS, and explored any constraints and challenges faced by them including access and quality of these services.

The service delivery provisions included, but not limited to healthcare, educational support, or economic support or any other support provided in terms of their basic needs. The research also discussed with the organizations and activists to understand any limitations and challenges they faced and also made recommendations and relevant suggestions for the social workers.

1.4. Problem Statement:

There are basic needs or conditions that one must meet in order to sustain their lives physically, psychologically and socially. These basic needs include, but not limited to food, health, education, housing, employment and security etc. Fulfilling basic needs is important to every human being despite of their differences. In Sri Lanka, RAS are not allowed to work, or to enrol their children in government schools. They mainly depend on the limited services provided through UN High Commissioner for Refugees and Non-Governmental Organizations. They face many issues in fulfilling minimum standards of their lives. However, a large number of RAS are living their lives under these limited welfare services and trying to meet the minimum standards of their lives. Meanwhile only few professionally trained social workers work with the refugees, raising questions about the quality of services they receive. Lack of knowledge is available on RAS in the context of Sri Lankan Social Work.

1.5. Research questions

There are three major research questions dealing in this study. These major questions are divided into further 8 sub-questions.

1) What are the welfare services provided for refugees and asylum seekers (RAS) in Sri Lanka and to what extent do they help RAS to meet the needs in their daily lives?
    a) What are the services provided by Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) to RAS and to what extent do they help them to meet their needs?
    b) What are the welfare services provided by NGOs and UNHCR to RAS and to what extent do they help them to meet their needs?

2) How do they maintain minimum standard of life while mostly dependent on the limited welfare provisions they receive?
    a) How do they meet their health needs including both mental and physical health and what challenges do they face in doing so?
    b) How do they meet their food and housing needs and what challenges do they face in doing so?
    c) How do they meet educational needs of children and what challenges do they face in doing so?
    d) What are the other needs they have and what challenges do they face in meeting them?
3) What opportunities exist for social workers to work with them?

    a) What are the opportunities for social workers to work with the RAS at micro, mezzo and macro levels?

    b) How does social work intervention could help the RAS in Sri Lanka to enhance their standard of life and achieve empowerment?

1.6. Key terms and key concepts

Refugees are a result of a specific form of human migration- the forced migration. To understand the broader context of refugees it is helpful to look at the concept of migration. Human migration is not a new thing. It has been happening all over the world since the prehistoric times, throughout civilizations, and in the current, contemporary world.

Migration can be occurring due to several factors. Lack of employment or entrepreneurship, lack of education or opportunities, health facilities or health reasons, marriage, political or religious rights, life threats, persecution based on sexual orientation, persecution based on religious beliefs or lack of religious freedom, lack of farmland, famine Or drought, oppressive legal or political conditions, war or terrorism, conflicts with other cultural groups, military or forced expulsion, over population or a decline of the quality of life etc. In general, migration can be divided into two parts as international and internal migration while those two parts can be further divided into another two categories as temporary and permanent and also it could be divided as

voluntary migration and forced migration (IOM, 2019). Migration causes quantitative and qualitative changes in the population of a country. That is, the gender of the migrant group, age structure, occupation, education level, health status, cultural diversity and socio-economic status of communities are impacting a country.

There is no formal legal definition of an international migrant. "Most experts agree that an international immigrant is someone who changes his or her usual place of residence, regardless of immigration or legal status." Generally speaking, there is a difference between short-term or temporary migration, covering motions with a period of three to 12 months, and referring to long-term or permanent migration, changing the country of residence for a year or more. (UN Refugees and migrants, 2020) International Organization for Migration (IOM) for says "migrant is an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay of a person who moves away from his or her place of residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or not. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers, persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants, and their status as well. (IOM, 2019, p. 133) So if the migration is about crossing a country or international border we can take it is as an international migration. If it is within the country it can take as an internal migration. There are various types of migration, based on the reason that led to the migration such as family migration, skill migration, labour migration, economic migration, forced migration etc. The term family migration takes three main forms. (i) family reunification of spouse, parent, children or other relatives; (ii) family formation or new marriage of a migrant with permanent residents or citizens; or (iii) family accompanying a family member entering at the same time as the primary migrant. (IOM, 2019, p. 71) Economic migration is the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a state motivated solely or primarily by economic opportunities. Economic migration differs from labour migration in that it is not necessarily for the purpose of seeking or entering into employment but may also include economic activities such as investment. Labour migration is the movement of persons from one state to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment (IOM, 2019, p. 123). Labour migration could be further divided as unskilled labour migration and skilled labour migration. A skilled migrant can be described as" a migrant worker who has the appropriate skill level and specialization to

carry out the tasks and duties of a given job. Whilst what may constitute a skilled migrant varies between countries and often determined by a range of factors such as labour market needs. Skilled migrants are usually granted preferential treatment regarding admission to a country. When a person leaves the country during international migration, it is called an emigration and the country to which he enters is immigration" (IOM, 2019, pp. 192 -198).

The form of migration that relates with refugees is forced migration. When someone leaves their home for well-known fear of persecution or violence against themselves or their family members, or torture or violence, as well as economic, natural or man-made abnormal circumstances, where a person has to leave the area or country where he lived, it is usually recognized as the forced migration**.** When we consider the term forced migration, it seems that term might have been derived from the definition of a refugee provided in the refugee convention in 1951.

Refugee convention (1951) defines "refugee who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence" and as a person who has "a well-founded fear of the causes of persecution: race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group". Most likely, they are unable to return their homes because of the well-founded fear. Harriet and Robert (2010) explains the term migration as "a general term that refers to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people (those displaced by conflicts within their country of origin) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects."

The term very closely associated with the term refugee is internally displaced person (IDP). In the current context, refugee is used to persons who have fled their country and crossed the national border and entered another country. IDPs refer to people who are still inside the country border. Internally Displaced Person (IDP) could be defined as "someone who has been forced to flee their home but never crossed an international border. These individuals seek safety anywhere they can find it—in nearby towns, schools, settlements, internal camps, even forests and fields. IDPs include people displaced by internal strife and natural disasters" (UN Convention about Refugees, 1951) "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid

the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border" (Deng & Francis, 1998). In Sri Lanka, there were many IDPs during war in the north, and IDPs could be resulted in large numbers during natural disasters such as floods or Tsunami disasters and manmade disasters such as wars, conflicts and environmental pollution.

The next important term is asylum seeker that is usually defined as "someone who has applied for protection as a refugee and is awaiting the determination of his or her status." (UN Convention about Refugees, 1951). This study has mainly dealt with the status of RAS in Sri Lanka awaiting permanent relocation in a third country.

1.7. Theoretical framework

This study used Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP), lifestyle model of systems theory and Maslow's hierarchy needs in this study as its theoretical framework. AOP is a model in Social Work that aims to function and promote equal, non-oppressive social relations between various identities it helps to understand and challenge social inequalities and forms of oppression embedded within social institutions, relationships between individuals and groups and to identify how they can be changed. Systems theory helps to understand the social systems such as person, family, schools, organizations and government - covering micro, mezzo and macro levels. This research also looks at the needs of the RAS. To understand the concept of needs, the theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is used. Maslow's hierarchy of needs explain five stages of human needs and how people prioritize them.

1.8. Social Work and working with refugees

International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and local international social work professional bodies have also highlighted the importance of addressing the concerns related to Social Work. More than twenty years ago, at the IFSW General Meeting held in Hong Kong from July 21-23, 1998, a policy statement was issued on RAS, stating that the social work profession assumes responsibility for responding to refugee disasters and strives to be as involved as possible in addressing the needs of refugees. It further

said that working with refugees should be a part of the mainstream of social work education and practice and advocated for providing specialized services to special or vulnerable groups, such as women and non-assisted children, victims of torture and trauma, the elderly and the disabled and policy level interventions at local at international levels to advocate for rights of refugees. (IFSW, 1998) On September 2, 2015, the death of a Syrian refugee child named Alan Kurdi led to much controversy and highlighted the importance of the lives of refugees around the world and questions about the global policies. A statement issued by IFSW, three days after the event, once again highlighted the importance of the social work profession and professionals in the subject of refugees. They also remembered the history of the important roles played by the social workers in rebuilding communities during the World War II refugee crisis. The statement also stated that adopting social work principles to provide sustainable solutions that will enable people to find peace and security and admired social work professionals who are providing services to millions of people who have been affected by the refugee crisis. It further said that Social work professionals are a catalyst for the integration of refugees into new areas and organization of volunteers and requested governments and authorities to work towards a sustainable solution to this crisis with the expertise of social workers (IFSW, 2015)

RAS is a subject of interest for social workers and their interventions. Approaches such as transnational Social Work, International Social work and Multicultural Social Work have often discussed its importance. Popescu and Libal (2018), highlight the importance of including refugees and asylum seeker issues in social work, education and training as a profession in advancing the human rights of migrants and refugees. According to Richard Hugman (2010), social work with RAS is one of the most recent specializations of the social work profession, but research papers published in this field have focused on refugee reception countries in the global north. He further notes that significant publications on the role of social work in accepting, protecting and integrating refugees in the Global South have been lacking. As Hugman (2010) pointed out, lack of research on the situation of RAS could be seen in the case of Sri Lanka also. Hence, this study would serve as an attempt to find out the situation of the RAS in Sri Lanka and to analyse their situation from a social work perspective.

1.9. Chapter summary

This introductory chapter provided the background of the study and explained the key terms, theoretical framework, and the objectives, and the importance of the research. It was revealed that that there has been very little research conducted in the context of Sri Lanka, and lack of knowledge as a major gap. This study is an exploratory study which analyses the situation of refugees & asylum seekers in Sri Lanka in relation to fulfilling their basic needs from a Social work Perspective. The study explored what problems faced by the RAS, how the service providers address these problems, and what opportunities exist for social workers to work with them. The key terms such as refugee, asylum seeker, internally displaced persons, migration etc. were also explained in this chapter. The study applied AOP, lifestyle model of systems theory and Maslow's hierarchy needs as its theoretical framework. The final part of the chapter discussed the importance of Social Work for addressing issues faced by RAS.

2. Literature review

Literature review is an important component of any research, which provides a critical evaluation of existing academic knowledge relevant to the theme of the study. Literature review involves a logical discussion with theories, key concepts, and findings of similar studies that build the existing knowledge base on the topic. A literature review usually summarises existing knowledge and helps to identify gaps and weaknesses in the existing knowledge base.

This literature review which analyses the history and current situation of refugees and asylum seekers provides an overview of existing knowledge on the topic including their legal and policy situation, covering the literature on refugees in Sri Lanka, and few other countries in Asia as well as Sri Lankan refugees abroad. The social welfare of Sri Lanka is also examined, as it constitutes an important aspect in understanding service delivery in the context of Sri Lanka. Finally this literature review also presents the Anti-oppressive Practice (AOP), systems theory and Maslow's theory that build the theoretical and conceptual framework of this research.

2.1. History of forced human migration in the context of Sri Lanka

According to ancient chronicles in Sri Lanka, in the past, people from different countries have arrived in Sri Lanka as they were unable to live in their home countries. For example, according to the origin myth mentioned in the Mahavamsa, Sinhalese: the main ethnic group living in Sri Lanka at present have originated from Prince Vijaya who migrated to Sri Lanka in 6th Century BC along with seven hundred other people who arrived in Sri Lanka after they were expelled from their country located in the Indian subcontinent. Similarly, Mahavamsa mentions another chronicle of a Pandya prince who fled the Chola Empire in Southern India and arrived in Sri Lanka to save his life during the reign of King Parakramabahu I (1123–1186 AD). In both of these instances, they were forced to leave their respective countries because they were expelled because of the fear of life and political conditions that led to fear of life. Mahavamsa also mentions chronicles on Sri Lankan princes who fled the country to save their lives. One such instance is the escape of his brother Prince Mugalan to India during the reign of King Kashyapa-I (c. 473 - 495 AD). There are also mentions about a monk who lived in

a temple in Anuradhapura who had fled to India or the hill country to save his life due to a famine in the country during the reign of King Walagamba (103 BC) (Somathilaka, 2014, p. 77). This indicates that in the past as well as in the present, natural disasters and political conditions have led to the creation of refugees. Today Sri Lanka is considered a one country. However in history there was many times that several rulers ruled Sri Lanka. The Mahahamsa also mention how the persons fled between different areas controlled by different rulers for the protection of their lives. One such incident was the invasion of the kingdom of Anuradhapura by the Chola (Indian) ruler Elara (205 BC - 161 BC). A large number of people living in Rajarata have fled to the kingdom of Magama in the south for the protection of their lives.

It is also reported that during the rule of Portuguese in Sri Lanka under Captain de Souza in the early 17th Century, nearly 4,000 Muslims living on the island's west coast had fled into the upcountry to save their lives and they have been settled in the eastern part of Sri Lanka in 1626 by King Senarath (1604–1635 AD), the ruler of Kandyan Kingdom (Queyroz, 1930). At the time, coastal areas were ruled by the Portuguese invaders, and the Kandyan kingdom was ruled by the local king. Historically, this is a clear example of refugees fleeing and crossing borders and getting relocated in another area because of well-founded fear of life.

Because of the repressive laws certain communities and populations could become refugees suddenly. One of the best examples from Sri Lankan history is the controversial Ceylon Citizenship Act which denied rights of Indian descent Tamils. During the colonial period, a number of Indian labourers were brought to Sri Lanka by the British rulers to work in plantations in Sri Lanka. At the time of the independence of Sri Lanka, there were over 700,000 Indian descent Tamils in Sri Lanka, representing 11% of the total population and 51% of the total Tamil population (Divaina, 2019). As a result of Citizenship Act No. 18 of 1948 and other laws, almost all of them were denied citizenship and voting rights. To qualify for Sri Lankan citizenship, they were asked to provide documented evidence to prove that they were living in Sri Lanka at least since two generations, and most of the estate Tamils who were illiterate did not qualify for this (Wickrmasinghe, 2014, p. 179). As Wickrmasinghe (2014, p. 170) notes three pieces of legislation-the Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948, the Indian and Pakistani Residents Act No 3 of 1948, and the Ceylon Parliamentary Elections Amendment Act No. 48 of 1949 contributed to this crisis. The first law deprived the citizenship of

Estate/Indian Tamils, the second made it possible for those with property and education within the community to obtain citizenship, and the third deprived those without citizenship of the right to vote. A group of people who have been living in the country for so long and who have been the backbone of Sri Lanka's economy became stateless persons overnight. This incident also appears to have been one of the root causes of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

The "Black July" riots in 1983 were the other major incident which forced Sri Lankan Tamils to flee Sri Lanka into other countries for their safety. According to official figures, the Black July riots left 371 Tamils dead and up to 100,000 homeless. The riots also created approximately 130,000 refugees. At least 78,000 of these refugees were sheltered in 12 hastily erected camps in the capital Colombo. It is estimated that around 162,000 Tamils were living in Colombo when the riots broke out. Of the remaining refugees, around 15,000 were sheltered in centres outside the capital, mainly in Kandy, 62 miles east of Colombo. The total damage caused to commercial and residential property following the riots was estimated at approximately $140-180 million or 4% of the country's gross national product. Finally, an estimated 100,000 people, including a large number of Sinhalese employees, lost their jobs as a result of the destruction of Tamil owned industries (Tambiah, 1986, p. 28). The United States Committee for Refugees (UCSR) says more than 2,000 Tamils have been killed, more than 18,000 homes destroyed by Tamils, 5,000 shops and businesses destroyed, and more than 200,000 chased away from their homes (Robinson, 1991). After the riots, the security borders disappeared, and by mid-1986 some 125,000 Sri Lankan refugees who had fled India had sought refuge in Europe, North America and Australia (Robinson, 1991).

The major crisis in Sri Lanka in the recent past that resulted in large numbers of refugees and IDPs was the civil war in Sri Lanka that lasted for more than three decades. More than 100,000 lives were destroyed (DeVotta, 2011). People became disabled; their properties were destroyed in large numbers as a result of this crisis. Though civil war has ended almost a decade ago, Sri Lanka still experiences the direct and indirect consequences of this war, which has created many problems both locally and internationally.

During the civil war, many incidents contributed to the increased crisis of refugees and IDPs. In October 1990, the LTTE expelled more than 75,000 Muslims from the Northern Province, making them internally displaced persons within two weeks (LST, 2011). Also, many Tamils left the country as refugees during the war. In 2003 alone, some 5,500 Sri Lankans applied for asylum elsewhere, more than 1,700 in France and 1,200 in Canada (USCRI, 2004). UNHCR's statistics, gathered from governments, show that at the end of the 2010 there were some 140,000 Sri Lankan refugees in 65 countries, with a majority almost 70,000 in 112 refugee camps in India and another 32,000 living outside the camps in Tamil Nadu. And they mentioned France, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Australia, Malaysia, the United States and Italy are the other main countries with Sri Lankan refugees. In addition they said, around 800,000 Sri Lankan Tamils have been internally displaced due to this war (UNHCR, 2011). Even after the war ended in 2009, Sri Lankan refugees continued fleeing the country. Between 2009 and 2013, after the end of the conflict, some 4500 Sri Lankan refugees went to Australia by boat. (Betts & Higgins, 2017)

2.2. History of refugees and asylum seekers in the world

Some scholars in their research have outlined the areas where asylum seekers and political asylum seekers are most likely, the root causes and the approximate number of refugees.

In the fifteenth century: Moors, Jews, expelled from Spain by the Inquisition. Seventeenth century: Puritans cross the Atlantic seeking religious freedom. Eighteenth century: French aristocrats flee the French Revolution. Nineteenth century: Russians, Poles, Germans flee autocracies. 1918 Pogroms, revolution, ethnic strife in Russia, Balkans, Asia Minor, lead to individual émigrés and large-scale movements as revolutions topple dynasties. 1930s Fascist repression and aggression evict many from Germany, Italy, Spain, and China. Second World War: Estimated 7 million Jews, Gypsies, political dissidents ill-treated, even liquidated, by Nazis. 1945–56 Over 200,000 Poles, Czechs, Latvians, Lithuanians, Hungarians, welcomed to Britain as 'Volunteer workers' fleeing Soviet oppression. 1950s Communist takeover of Tibet, China, Indonesia, Castro in Cuba, and Israeli- Arab wars, lead to wholesale evictions and flight. 1960s, 1970s Vietnam War displaces many thousands. 1974 Cyprus is

divided, with 200,000 Greek Cypriots moving south, 40,000 Turkish Cypriots going north. Division seems set in stone.1980s–2000 Liberation struggles, wars, coups, ethnic contests, environmental disasters, poverty, famines, all generate mass movements, e.g. Ugandan, Asians, Chileans, Kurds, Zaireans (Whittaker, 2005).

2.3. Policies and Legal situation

The United Nations Refugee Convention in 1951 is the main legal document that sets the legal status of RAS. It has been ratified by 145 countries and defines the term 'refugee ' which states the rights of the displaced and the legal obligations of states to protect them. It also defines who is a refugee and who does not qualify as a refugee, such as war criminals. The Convention also provides for visa-free travel for travel documents holders issued under the Convention. The basic principle is non-refoulement. It means that a refugee should not be forcefully returned to a country where his life or liberty is in serious danger. This is now considered a rule of traditional international law.

2.4. Welfare

Donald Chandrarathna notes that Sri Lanka is a welfare society since its traditional times, due to influence of Buddhism that encouraged helping to vulnerable communities (Chandrarathna, 2008, p. 101). However modern welfare state in Sri Lanka has been more an outgrowth of the welfare provided by British colonial government. Sri Lanka is one of the earliest countries to provide free health and free education to its citizens. According to Chandrarathna (2008, p. 100) “a welfare state is a state with government protected minimum standards of income, nutrition, health and safety, education and housing assured to every citizen as a social right”.

Sri Lanka is well known among developed and third world countries as a welfare state with a wide range of social welfare policies and programs. Sri Lanka's social development indicators stay ahead of many third world countries due to the expansion and implementation of social welfare policies over the decades. (Dissanayake et al., 1981, p. 305) Governments' high attention to the social welfare sector led to this progress.

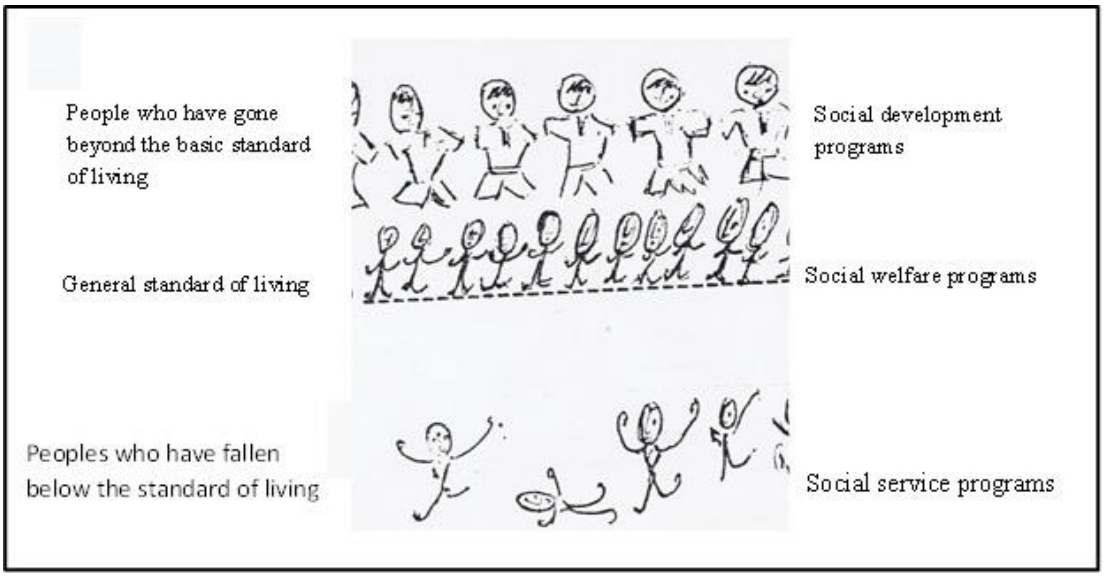
In 1965 a separate Ministry was established for the purpose of Social Services in Sri Lanka and the Department of Social Services and the Department of Probation and Child Care Services, and Sri Lanka School of Social Work was brought under that Ministry. Many of the social services are provided by these departments and the primary function of the Sri Lanka School of Social Work was to train the professional and inter-professional level social work required by Sri Lanka through manpower training and social welfare (Dissanayake et al., 1981, p. 311). Though this has been correct for most of the governments, this has been changed under some governments including the current government in 2020. However, the long standing institutions dedicated for social services, and social welfare including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of health have shaped and developed Sri Lankan welfare sector.

Long history of Sri Lankan welfare state explains the various steps taken by the government to improve social welfare. Chandraratne (2008) makes an extensive list of social welfare and social service officers in Sri Lanka under 21 sections, which include more than 30,000 government employees, where there is a need for social workers (Chandraratne. 2008, p. 28). However, the workforce of social welfare in Sri Lanka is even broader with the employees working with education, and health sectors.

In most industrialized societies, poverty and social exclusion at the bottom are alleviated to some degree by the welfare state (Giddens, 2006, p. 365). Through social welfare, modern states often seek to address the problems caused by poverty and social exclusion. There are two different approaches to poverty as presented by sociologists and researchers: absolute poverty and relative poverty. The concept of absolute poverty is grounded in the idea of subsistence - the basic conditions that must be met in order to sustain a physically healthy existence such as sufficient food, shelter and clothing." Relative poverty sees poverty as a cultural construction and a phenomenon particular to a certain society. It refuses the idea of universal poverty (Giddens, 2006, pp. 341-342).

A welfare state provides welfare and social services that can help vulnerable communities in a society. The special assistance given to communities and individuals who lack a general standard of living can be termed as social services (Dissanayake et al., 1981, p. 305). Examples of such social services are the allowance given to the disabled in Sri Lanka, the allowance given to the sick, etc.

Figure 1: Difference between Social services, Social Welfare and Social Development


People who have gone beyond the basic standard of living
Social development programs
General standard of living
Social welfare programs
Peoples who have fallen below the standard of living
Social service programs

Source: Dissanayake et al., 1981, p. 308

Dissanayake (Dissanayake et al., 1981, p. 308) presents a diagram to illustrate the difference between social service programs, social welfare and social development programs.

As shown in the figure above, some people in a particular society live at the level of general standard of living. Social services are provided only for specific groups below the general standard of living. Those who have achieved general standard of living are not included in these programs.

Social welfare programmes are provided to those who already have a general standard of life. They are generally provided to people living in all walks of life. (Dissanayake et al., p. 308). People currently having a general standard of life and people who have been elevated to the general standard of life through social service programs are further assisted by social welfare programs. Social Development programs helps a society to achieve a higher standard of living after achieving the general standard of living.

2.5. Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP)

Oppression is mistreatment or exercise of power. It can happen directly or indirectly. Oppression can also be active in a variety of ways, both as individuals, as institutions, legally, religiously, and culturally. According to Oxford Lexico dictionary oppression is "Prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or exercise of authority, the state of being subject to oppressive treatment, Mental pressure or stress" (Oxford Lexico dictionary, 2021) Anti-oppressive is the elimination or reduction of these forms of oppression. It prevents practical functional divisions and guides society from a transformative angle in human relations.

AOP is a model in Social Work that aims to function and promote equal, non-oppressive social relations between various identities (Hogewoning, 2012, p. 8). There are many identities deriving from nationalities, ethnicities, races, religions, castes, gender expressions and identities, sexualities and class. These identities can have oppressive social relationships with each other that can result and include exclusion, discrimination, hostility and other forms of oppression. Anti-oppressive social work also addresses social divisions and structural inequalities in the work done with clients and workers. It aims to change the structure and procedures of service delivery through macrosystemic changes at the legal and political level (Beresford & Croft, 2004; Clifford & Burke, 2005; George et al., 2007). A more comprehensive definition is provided by Dominelli (1994).

AOP is "a form of social work practice which addresses social divisions and structural inequalities in the work that is done with people whether they are users ('clients') or workers. AOP aims to provide more appropriate and sensitive services by responding to people's needs regardless of their social status. AOP embodies a person centred philosophy; an egalitarian value system concerned with reducing the deleterious effects of structural inequalities upon people's lives; a methodology focusing on both process and outcome; and a way of structuring relationships between individuals that aims to empower users by reducing the negative effects of social hierarchies on their interaction and the work they do together" (Dominelli, 1994, p.3 as cited in Dominelli 1996, pp. 170-171)

As mentioned above by Dominelli (1996), AOP addresses social divisions and structural inequalities. As already discussed, social divisions are available across nationalities, ethnicities, class, gender and sexuality. These social divisions also carry inequalities such as unequal distribution of resources including welfare and social services, and result poverty, racism, discrimination and other structural issues. AOP attempts to understand these issues and to respond accordingly. As pointed above it also deals with an 'egalitarian value system' that focuses to reduce these inequalities and forms of oppression. These value system is more included in the social work ethics and principles.

Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles issued by International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW, 2018) recognizes promoting social justice as a Principle of Social Work profession. Therefore social workers have a responsibility to challenge discrimination and institutional oppression, respect for diversity, promote access to equitable resources, to challenge unjust policies and practices, and to build solidarity towards transformational change and inclusive and responsible societies. Implementation of these values into practice necessarily involves anti-oppressive dimension.

According to Burke and Harrison (Burke & Harrison, 1998, pp. 231-232), there are five characteristics of anti-oppressive social work. They are (1) Social differences, (2) linking personal and political, (3) power, (4) historical and geographical location and (5) reflexivity/ mutual involvement. Social differences arise from the disparities between the dominated and dominant groups. Issues considered as personal because they occur in one's private life, or in domestic spaces, they are not necessarily personal, but also carry political dimensions. Practice of power is strongly connected to the social inequalities and disparities. Communities such as refugees are often subject to oppression due to historical and geographical location. These places also can carry cultural, and linguistic differences and can play very important aspects of one's life. Reflexivity provides social workers the ability to understand how values, social differences and power in various aspects. It could also be the basis of AOP.

When it comes to RAS, they are often a community usually subjected to stigma, discrimination, and exclusion in the societies they live. Dominelli (2002) argues that Social work is an oppressive caring profession. When Social workers make decisions about welfare and service provisions about RAS and considering the less powerful

position of these persons, social work play an oppressive role. Dominelli (2002) argues that awareness and sensitivity of social workers on the power inequalities in the systems they operate could help to reduce or minimize such oppression. Clifford (Clifford, 1995, p. 65) mentions about the health, educational, political, and economic, media and cultural systems and their routine provision of services and rewards for powerful groups at local as well as national and international levels. The welfare systems in general established to benefit the most vulnerable, however may leave out non-citizens such as RAS.

The state while acts as a major provider of the welfare; it can also act as a major oppressive organization, especially when it comes to RAS. Dominelli says 'state relies on the regulation of people both within and outside of its borders to ensure that those who belong to its polity are those entitled to remain within its boundaries whilst others are excluded' (Dominelli, 2002, p.174). Therefore border of a country becomes an oppressive limit. These borders also decide nationality, even if someone entered into a country, the facilities provided depend on the notion of citizenship that deals with the border. Lena also explains that social workers have to work in conditions, that they have a less control about (Dominelli, 2002, p. 175). The AOP works to build an understanding on the various aspects at micro, mezzo and macro levels that social work involves and recognizes the oppression at these various levels, and help social worker to build a critical understanding of power and inequalities that impact especially on vulnerable groups such as RAS, but also others.

2.6. Systems theory - Life style model

Social system theories emerged from the general systems theory that was prevalent in the psychological and natural sciences in the early twentieth century. General system theory treats the whole (anything tested) as more than the sum of its parts. General system theory examines how parts of a system affect the whole system or organism. Scientists in various fields, such as physics and psychology, have begun to use system theories to understand the world around them. (Ruggiero, 2019) Social system theories help social workers understand a multitude of social problems, including family problems, child abuse, community functioning, and issues affecting individuals such as

anxiety, low self-esteem, and relationship problems. Specific social work practice theories, based on system theory, have emerged to help social workers to understand and solve personal and social problems. An example is the family system theory developed by Bowen in 1945 (Bowen, 1945 as cited in Haefner, 2014).

The life model of social work practice (Germain & Gitterman, 1980) was also highly influenced by social systems thinking (Ruggier, 2019). The original model emphasized practice with individuals, groups, families, and neighbourhoods but was later revised to increase its emphasis on policy practice and policy advocacy. Ecological theory also influenced the life model of Social work practice by emphasizing the "continuous exchanges between people and their environments" *(*Gitterman, 2017 as cited in Ruggiero, 2019*).* The lifestyle model requires examining how an individual fits in with their environment, how they adapt, and how to cope with the limitations and toxicity of one's environment. The lifestyle model can be used to look at people in organizational environments or communities. The life model requires examining the major events in a person's life, such as major events in a person's life, major life transitions, periods of increasing environmental stress, or changes in relationships. Groups and organizations such as micro-level or mezzo-level schools can be seen as supporting or hindering a person during these key transition periods. Groups and organizations such as micro-level or mezzo-level schools can be seen as supporting or hindering a person during these key transition periods. The model also explores how major historical events and social changes affect generational cooperation.

Working with underestimated and marginalized communities can also inform the social model of life and, as noted above, look at community issues and the impact that government policies have on individuals and communities.

"A social worker using the life course model might lobby the government to enact social policies and programs that help underserved communities, mobilize organizations and stakeholders in addressing community-wide problems, and garner resources needed by the community" (Gitterman, 1976).

2.7. Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow attempted to understand what motivates people. He believed that individuals possess a set of motivation systems unrelated to rewards or unconscious desires. (McLeod, 2007)

In 1943, he introduced this concept as a motivational theory in psychology. He identified five motivational needs often shown as five stages in a pyramid.

These five stages include 1. Biological and Physiological needs (air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep), 2. Safety needs (protection from elements, security, order, law, limits, stability, and freedom from fear), 3.Social needs (belongingness, affection and love, - from work group, family, friends, romantic relationships), 4. Esteem needs (achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, self-respect, and respect from others), 5. Self-Actualization needs (realizing personal potential, self-fulfilment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences). The theory believes that a person is only concerned about the next phase when they have fulfilled the current phase requirements. Also he said people are motivated to achieve certain needs. When one need is fulfilled a person seeks to fulfil the next one, and so on.

2.8. Summary and Research Gaps

The subject of asylum seekers and refugees is a subject of much interest for researchers all around the world. (Kate, 2005; Hynes, 2003; Rawlence, 2016; Krzyzanowski et al., 2018) According to many of these studies, warfare, political instability, political ideology, loss of freedom of expression, racial strife, religious extremism and natural disasters are the main causes for the emergence of refugees on a large scale. Also, there are some studies that focus on Sri Lankan RAS in other countries (Valatheeswaran, 2015; George, 2013; Robinson, 1991; Betts et al., 2017). In these study concepts such as forced migration, welfare was discussed. Also literature on theoretical framework that included AOP, systems theory, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs was also discussed. In Sri Lanka limited research has been conducted about RAS. No social work research has focused on RAS.

3. Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology of the research. It discusses about population of the study, sampling techniques, data collection tools, analytical method, ethical and other limitations of the study.

3.1. Population of the study and research participants

The participants in this study were staff of service delivery NGOs, UNHCR and independent activists who work with RAS, a government welfare officer and a professional social Worker.

3.2. Sampling method

This research gathered and analysed information provided by both formal and informal service providers to the RAS. Pant states that the purpose of research is "to find out about a particular subject that has significance for the researcher" (pant, 2009, p.10) According to Bist “research is common phenomenon to investigate the resolution of existing problems and generate the new dimension of knowledge in all sectors. It aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and wisdom which is undertaken with its certain system and procedures” (Bist, 2014, p.34). The sampling method attempts to explain how the research participants were selected, and reasons. Webster (1985) defines the research sample as “a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole.”

Purposive sampling method was used in this study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method and it occurs when “elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. Researchers often believe that they can obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment, which will result in saving time and money” (Black, 2011). The success of this method depends on the researcher’s prior-knowledge and contacts about the subject of research. The key informants are hand-picked based on their knowledge on the subject and relevance to the subject (Denscombe, 2010, p. 35).

When looked at the advantages of Purposive Sampling, it is one of the most cost effective and time saving method. Purposive sampling is well-suited for exploratory research (Descombe, 2010, p.35) where lack of researched knowledge is available on a topic. Also Purposive Sampling method has disadvantages such as vulnerability to errors in judgment, low level of reliability and high levels of bias. Subsequently there may be difficulties in generalizing research findings.

3.3. Data collection tools

Data collection tools refer to devices / equipment used to collect data, such as a paper questionnaire or an electronic questionnaire. Case studies, checklists, interviews, observations, surveys or questionnaires are examples for data collection tools. Determining tools for data collection is important because research is done in different ways and for different purposes. The purpose behind data collection is to capture qualitative evidence that allows analysis to produce convincing and credible answers to the questions that arise. Different types of data collection tools can be used in data collection. In-depth interview methodology can take as a tool for data collection. Key Informant Interview (KII) was used as the major data collection tool in this study.

Key informant interview (KII)

Interviews with 10 key informants were conducted. They included staff of service delivery NGOs, UNHCR and independent activists who work with RAS, a government welfare officer and a professional social Worker. The interviews focused on welfare services provided to RAS by government and non-government sectors. They also discussed the quality of welfare services and their efficiency, issues and suggestions and recommendations of KIs.

Key informants were selected based on the recommendations of provided by the organizations and individuals who are well aware of the situation RAS in Sri Lanka. 6 key informants worked in the non-governmental sector, while one welfare officer from the Sri Lankan government sector. In addition, a UN official, a professional social worker were also interviewed.

Key informants' interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community and / or in the relevant field. The purpose of key informative interviews is to gather information from a wide range of people, such as community leaders, professionals, field researchers, and residents who have prior knowledge of the field or community. These experts with their specialized knowledge and understanding can provide an understanding of the nature of the problem or situation and can also make recommendations for solutions.

According to Tremblay 1982, "the term key informant seems to come originally from ethnographic research and is used widely in cultural anthropology. In fact, in its early use in 1939 it was known as 'the anthropological technique" (Tremblay, 1982, p. 98). As described by Skinner "It was regarded as an ideal means of purposeful entrée to a cultural group to focus on identification of its characteristics, when interviewing for research was still a novelty" (Skinner, 2012, p. 26).

Limitations of the tool

Same as the purposive sampling method, success of KII depends on the researcher's prior knowledge about the study population. Marshal (1996) argues since the Key Informant method is limited by the prior-knowledge of the researcher on the community being studied, mistakes that lead to biases could often occur in the level of selecting the participants. When researcher does not have such an expertise about the community studied, their choice of selection often depend on the suggestions provided by an organization. Based on the biases that the organization have the research could be limited. They may reach to community leaders who may not have sufficient knowledge on the relevant subject (McKechnie et al., 2006). However, I did not rely on the recommendations of a single source, but considered the multiple recommendations before selecting the interviewees. Also some interviewees were selected with my prior knowledge about their expertise.

According to Bernard "some key informants are reluctant to share their intellectual property, fearing how their knowledge will be used or the consequences of that use. Also some information may be withheld because of their limited ability to be open, fears and, privacy considerations they have. He also notes that it is a challenge for the researcher

to determine whether they provide honest and accurate information" (Bernard, 2018, p. 156). The fears that the key informants might have was minimized through a transparent, and ethical research process that informed consent process was given much priority. However, I agree with the fact that it is impossible to find out whether the interviewees tell the 'truth' or not. However, this bias could be minimized in the process of analysis considering whether certain facts could be verified with the data gathered from multiple sources.

3.4. Analytical method: Thematic Analysis

Data analysis can be simply defined as the process of examining, cleaning, translating, and modelling data with the goal of finding useful information, informing conclusions, and assisting in decision making. There are also different data analysis techniques under different names. Thematic analysis is one of them. According to Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke "Thematic analysis (TA) should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis. It provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, P. 78)TA is one of the most common and simplest analytical method in qualitative research. It is an approach to extracting meanings and concepts from data that includes determining, examining, and recording patterns or themes. TA not only provides a flexible methodology of data analysis in qualitative research, but also more provides a more systematic and clear form without threatening the depth of the analysis. Braun & Clarke, (2006) developed a six-phase process for doing TA: 1. Familiarization, 2.Coding, 3.Generating themes, 4.Reviewing themes, 5.Defining and naming themes, 6.Writing up. These stages are sequential, and although each builds on the previous ones, the analysis is usually a repetitive process, moving forward and backward between different stages (ibid).

According to Mostafa Javadi and Koroush Zarea (2016), there are four main approaches to thematic analysis: (i) Inductive thematic analysis, (ii) Deductive (Theoretical) thematic analysis, (iii) Semantic or Latent thematic analysis and (iv) Latent themes (interpretative) thematic analysis (Javadi & Zarea, 2016, pp. 33-39).

In this research, I use the Inductive TA. Coding and theme development are guided by the content of the data in Inductive TA.

3.5. Ethical considerations

There are ethical dilemmas surrounding the confidentiality of shared information, which can put the researcher in an unethical position. Disclosure of confidential information is an obvious error. There are also anthropological examples of it."(Griffiths, 2018, pp. 100-103). Ethical concerns were a major priority in this study.

Informed consent was obtained from the participants, before conducting the interview. I shared information on objectives of research, background of researcher, purpose of data collection. Also I informed that there will be no direct benefit to the participants, though there could be long term benefits to the community of RAS in Sri Lanka. The researcher also provided a certified letter containing all of this information. Interviews also took place at the discretion of the participants, with or without recording. Then their written permission to participate in the interviews was obtained.

Participation in the research occurred voluntarily. They were given the opportunity to refrain from commenting on certain matters, to withdraw from the interview, and to withdraw the information already provided at any time during the interview.

Confidentiality and right to anonymity was respected at each stage of the research, including during data collection, data storage, research writing and publishing. The primary data is destroyed at the end of the research. Also the research report does not provide identifiable information about any of the interviewees.

3.6. Limitations of the study

The main limitation in this study is the lack of participation of RAS - the direct beneficiaries of the welfare services and the main subject of the research. Interviews were planned to hold with them in the initial stage of the research, however due to the covid-19 situation, it was difficult conduct the interviews. The next limitation is the low participation of public sector welfare providers and officials since public officers had limited meeting with outsiders, due to the covid-19 situation. They did not agree for online meetings as they did not want to record the interviews digitally.

As discussed under the limitations of the data collection tools, key informant interview method and purposive sampling methods have their own limitations. They are prone to

bias, and errors. Also limited number of interviewees may lead to further bias. The recommendations of organizations and individual activists working with RAS were considered in selecting interviewees. In selecting public officers, the priority was given to an officer working in the area that most of the RAS reside. Prior knowledge about some of the interviewees was also useful in selecting them. Also data can be limited by the institutional limitations of the staff of the organizations that work with RAS. In order to overcome this, independent activists who work with the community of RAS were included. This positively contributed to the study, since independent activists expressed opinions with less restrictions. The place of the interview could also limit the quality of the interview. For example, key informants working in organizations may find it difficult to express themselves when interviews are conducted at their workplaces. Therefore, several interviews were conducted at other locations that were suggested by the key informants. Such actions could help to minimize such limitations.

3.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research design selected and the reasons for choosing it. This included a discussion on study population, process of sampling, data collection and data analysis method, and ethics of the study. It provided information on the criteria for admission to the study, nature of the participants and how they were sampled, strengths and weaknesses in the sampling method. Then the data collection tools, their advantages and disadvantages, and how they were used in the study were described. Then the method of analysis and reasons for the choice was discussed. Then ethical procedures and their importance to the study were discussed. Finally limitations of the study, and the actions took for minimizing such limitations was presented.

4. Results and discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of this research. This is structured into seven main themes: the service delivery organizations and their services, food, health, education, social work with RAS. (See Table1). These themes and their corresponding sub-themes are presented and discussed in this chapter. When referring to specific respondents they were pseudo-named as R1 to R10 to protect their anonymity.

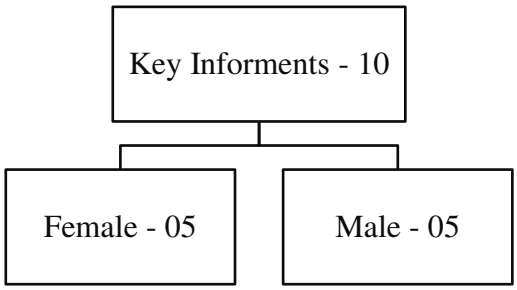
Table 1: Themes and Sub-themes

Main Themes	Sub-themes
service delivery organizations and their services	• Types of service delivery organizations and services • Health • Economic assistance • Education and training • Services provided by UNHCR
Interconnection between basic needs and economic status	• Economic difficulties • Sources of income • Dependency • Link with deep social inequalities
Employment	• Illegality • Right to employment • Advocacy for changes
Food and nutrition	• Food as a right • Culture and food • Issues of nutrition • Role of social workers
Housing	• Lack of space in houses • Concentration of RAS in Negambo area • Community support, service delivery and other conditions led to community of RAS in Negambo
Health	• Uncertainty and issues of mental wellbeing • Community Health • Maternal Health • Psychological wellbeing
Education	• Not eligible for public education • Economic difficulties and school drop-outs • Funding limitations • Visa issues • Government funding to education
Social Work Opportunities	• Micro, Mezzo and Macro • Working with individuals and families • Community work • Advocacy • Social work research and education

4.1. Profile of respondents

The following analysis presents the details of the participants. Ten key informants were participated in this research with an equal participation of both men and women.

Figure 2: gender of key informants



Source: field data

These 10 Key Informants (KI) represent 07 categories of institutions and individuals: (1) Government, (2) UNHCR, (3) UNHCR implementing Partners (NGOs), (4) other NGOs, (5) Voluntary collectives, (6) Activists and (7) Social Workers.

Figure 3: Types of institutions represented by the respondent

Source: Field Data

One Key Informant (KI) represented the government. Another KI represented UNHCR. Five KIs represented UNHCR and their implementing partners. Another KI represented NGOs in general. Three persons represented an unregistered support group for Refugees and Asylums seekers (RAS). In addition, an individual activist and a professional social worker also participated in this study. Of these, three represented multiple categories above.

The Key Informants included a psychosocial worker, a professional social worker, a welfare officer, two administrative officers and four other service delivery staff. Also, their experience in the field of RAS ranged from a minimum of one year to six years and more.

Table 2: Category of profession

Category of profession	**Number of interviewees**
Psycho social worker	1
Professional Social Worker and Academic	1
Administrators of refugee service delivery organizations	2
Government welfare sector officer	1
Human Rights activist	1
Refugee service delivery programme officers	4
Total	10

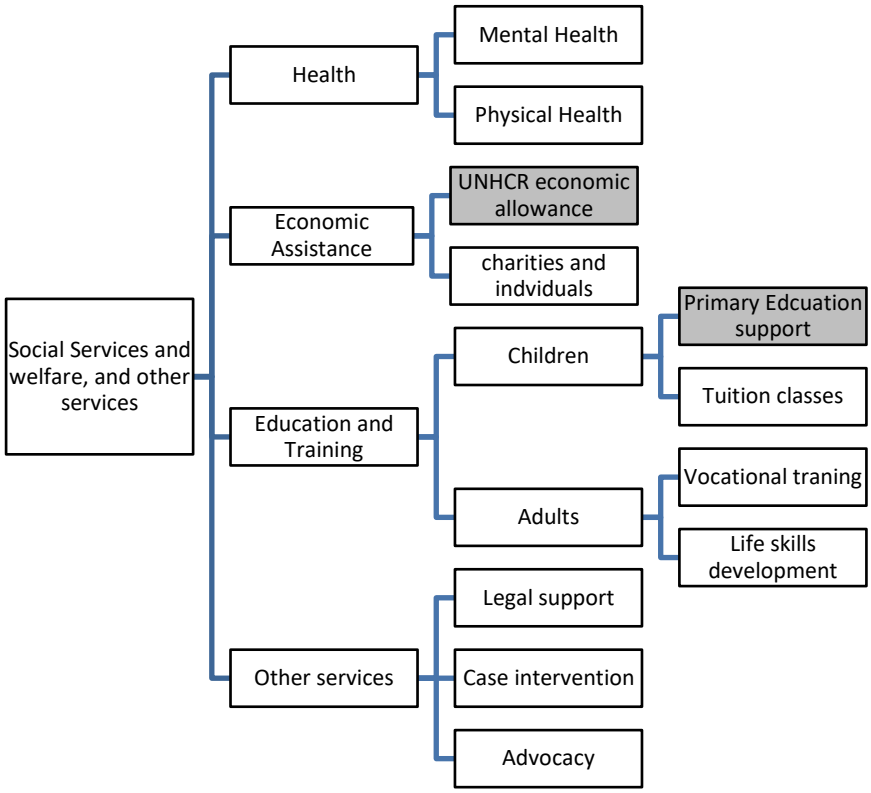
Source: Field Data

The sample also included six people with a basic degree in psychology, sociology, law, and two people with a master's degree and one doctorate in social work. One was a diploma holder, and the other was an activist who has written and published a large number of articles and interviews on refugees, asylum seekers and human rights in general both locally and internationally. Accordingly, almost all of these key informants can be considered as individuals with a higher educational background.

4.2. Service delivery organizations and services provided

4.2.1. Types of Services

Figure 4: Types of services provided



Note: services mentioned in coloured boxes are only available for refugees/ refugee children only.

Source: Field Data

This section describes the services provided to RAS. Based on the data obtained from the in-depth interviews, the services provided to RAS in Sri Lanka were identified. For the analysis, they were divided into four main categories: Health, Economic assistance, Education and training and other services.

As shown in the figure 4, the health services section is divided into two sub-sections: physical and mental health. The Economic Assistance section is also divided into two sub-sections: (1) UNHCR economic allowance and (2) other support from charities and individuals. The Education and Training section is divided into two sub-sections: (1) children and (2) Adults. Primary Education and Tuition classes are provided to children, while vocational training and Life skills development are provided to adults. Other services are divided into three sub-sections: Legal support, Case intervention and Advocacy.

4.2.2. Service delivery organizations

Services provided for RAS can be categorized according to service providers, their beneficiaries and types of services provided by them separately for RAS.

Table 3: Types of services, beneficiaries, and organizations

Service providers	**Refugees**	**Asylum Seekers**
Government	Health	Health
UNHCR	A. Economic Allowance B. Primary Education C. Health camps	**Not eligible for A,B** C. Health camps
UNHCR implementing partners	Tuition classes Vocational training Life skills development Legal support Case intervention Advocacy	Tuition classes Vocational training Life skills development Legal support Case intervention Advocacy
Other NGOs and collectives	Legal support Case intervention Advocacy	Legal support Case intervention Advocacy
Charities, individuals and others	Food Limited economic assistance	Food Limited economic assistance

Source: Field Data

The main welfare services in a country are usually provided by the government in a country. The Government of Sri Lanka is also the main welfare provider in Sri Lanka. All these RAS could usually receive free health services by the government, even though there are practical difficulties in some cases.

Another major service provider for this group is UNHCR. According to the refugee convention that established UNHCR in 1951, there are two primary responsibilities of UNHCR. Those responsibilities are to provide international protection to refugees and to work with governments to find lasting solutions for them.

In addition to their key responsibilities, they also intervene in the welfare of these people. Welfare services they provide to RAS in Sri Lanka include Economic Assistance, Primary education for children, Health camps etc. Only refugees are eligible for the

Economic Allowance & Primary Education services provided through UNHCR, while asylum seekers are not eligible. However, both groups are entitled to general community health services such as health camps they organize time to time.

United Nations and UN agencies such as UNHCR are intergovernmental organizations that Sri Lankan government also becomes a partner.

4.2.3. Health

As previously explained, only health services are provided free of charge by the government, while there are also practical limitations. In addition, UNHCR, UNHCR's Implementing Partners and their welfare NGOs provide various programs and services aimed at improving the physical and mental health of RAS.

Various health related programs and interventions that RAS benefit include psychological need assessment, case interventions, group therapy programs, motivation programs, art therapy programs, relaxation programs for adults, youth, and children, counselling, organizing social events aimed at improving mental wellbeing, awareness programmes on health and motivation, health camps and other community health programs such as tuberculosis and malaria control programs.

4.2.4. Economic Assistance

In general, both RAS suffer from poverty, and the government ban on their employment has worsened their economic issues. Asylum seekers meet their basic needs, including housing, food, health, education, clothing, and other necessities, based on money they brought to Sri Lanka, remittances, and charities.

UNHCR provides an allowance only for asylum seekers. This allowance usually ranges from a minimum of ten thousand rupees to a maximum of twenty five thousand rupees. Asylum seekers are not entitled to this allowance. In the case of a refugee family with children of primary school age, this allowance includes an amount to support their education. However, such a support is not provided for older children who are receiving secondary education.

4.2.5. Education and Training

Organizations such as ZOA offer vocational training courses for youth and adults. These vocational courses include house wiring, plumbing, international culinary, CCTV camera installation and maintenance, and sewing. They are also provided with life skills development programs such as how to prepare a nutritious meal at a low cost with local food.

Tuition classes are conducted for school age children on subjects such as English, science, mathematics and Information Technology. In addition, computer training courses, English and Sinhala language courses are also conducted for adults. Learning English helps them throughout the life, as it will be useful even when they move to a country for long term residence. Also it will help them to better communicate with service providing organizations, and to communicate well in the interviews conducted by the UNHCR. Learning Sinhala langue helps them to communicate and build connections with local community, and also it provides access to a range of services, and materials in communities they live in.

In addition to this, library facilities are also provided to them by UN implementing partners.

Both UNHCR and their implementing partners conduct awareness sessions to RAS on their legal status, restrictions and local laws that impact on them, and the services available for them and other relevant topics that are important for them during their stay in Sri Lanka.

4.2.6. Services provided by UNHCR

UNHCR started their work in Sri Lanka in the year 1987 following an invitation from the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) to assist in repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees in overseas. UNHCR has two main functions: (1) providing international protection to Persons of Concern (PoC) and to find lasting solutions for them in collaboration with governments. PoCs include refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, internally displaced persons (IDP) and returning refugees and other persons of similar status.

Another key function of the UNHCR is to investigate the applications of asylum seekers and to recognize suitable persons to grant asylum and to intervene in obtaining suitable a country for their permanent residence. UNHCR issues an identity card to the asylum seekers, and also provides a letter confirming that they have applied for asylum soon after they hand over the asylum application, giving them the ability to confirm their identity as asylum seekers. This provides them with a relative protection in case authorities question them for visa overstay.

In addition to providing an economic allowance to refugees, they have also provided some other assistance to refugees in Sri Lanka on special circumstances. For example, when they lost their accommodation following the Easter Sunday Bomb attack in Sri Lanka in April 2019, UNHCR intervened to provide temporary shelter and other essential items, including food and drink.

They also work with selected NGOs in the country known as "implementing partner organizations" to provide range of other services.

4.2.7. Other services

UNHCR and its Implementing partners conduct awareness programs for RAS in Sri Lanka.

There is a basic legal and procedural process that every new asylum seeker in Sri Lanka required to follow. First an asylum seeker requires to submit an asylum seeking application to the UNHCR office in Sri Lanka. The Implementing Partners provide the necessary assistance to such individuals in the preparation of the required documents in the process. After successfully submitting the application form to the UNHCR, they are issued with a letter confirming that they have submitted an application and have been recognized as asylum seeker/s by the UNHCR Sri Lanka. After that UNHCR begins the process of assessing the application and also informs the GoSL that they have recognized the person/s as asylum seeker/s.

The asylum seekers are required to register with the relevant Grama Niladhari (GN) officer and the relevant police station in the area by submitting necessary information. The implementing partners support them in this process.

Asylum seekers face interviews conducted by the UNHCR. Refugees also have to face interviews to obtain permanent citizenship in another country. Here too, these organizations provide assistance in preparing them for the interviews and assisting in the preparation of the required documents.

Also, Refugee Advocacy Group (RAG): a collective of organizations and individual activists have intervened to help RAS for seeking asylum and resettlement, to access services of health, food and other needs. They have also made necessary interventions on behalf of these two groups when they are rarely arrested for expiry of their visa, despite of letter issued by the UNHCR. RAG demonstrates an increased capacity and potential to influence the relevant institutions and authorities as it is a relatively independent, voluntary collective that has brought together key stakeholders concerning RAS in Sri Lanka including UNHCR, its implementing partners, other supportive NGOs and individuals who work with RAS.

4.3. Interconnection between basic needs and economic status

Key Informants revealed that RAS experience severe economic difficulties and poverty in various forms. Subsequently, these economic difficulties result many other difficulties in their daily lives. RAS manage to receive income in several limited means.

1) Money they bring when they come to Sri Lanka
2) Remittances from their relatives and friends (at home or abroad)
3) Economic allowance given only to refugees
4) Donations by Charities and individuals

R3, a human rights activist who works with RAS, speaking about their economic hardships, said:

> "Because of these economic hardships, when a child or family member falls ill, they are unable to get treatment from a private doctor or (private) hospital, get a phone connection, or even pay a phone bill. So for a person who has no money at least to spend on something like that, how it is possible to spend on something like entertainment?"

He expressed this view to explain other difficulties RAS face as a result of economic difficulties. It appears that r economic hardships reduce the overall quality of their life in many aspects, and therefore economic factors could possibly lead to complete neglect of needs such as mental health, in a situation that they find it very difficult to fulfil even their basic needs.

Table 4: Economic hardships and other needs

Economic hardships limit the fulfilment of other needs.	
Food	"Most people do not eat three meals a day. Even if you eat all the meals you will not eat 'rich food'". "Most people eat only one meal a day" "There were a lot of big issues like kids getting fainted"
Housing	"Most of them live in houses with little space."
Health	"When a child or family member falls ill, they cannot afford to be treated by a private doctor or a (private) hospital."
Education	"No money for private education" There is no other alternative for education, other than private education.
Communication	"You can't even get a phone connection, you can't even pay a phone bill."
Mental health needs	"parks and zoos are charge money" "How it is possible to spend on something like entertainment?" "Lack of money often leads to depression"

Source: Field Data

The main reason for their economic hardships is that they are not legally allowed to engage in an employment in Sri Lanka. If they have the right to employment, they will be able to find solutions for many of their problems in health, education, housing, and food. The KIs emphasized that the service providers should pay more attention to developing their economic generation and right to work.

> "We have to pay more attention to their income. Most of them are dependent from outsiders. For this reason, it is appropriate to allow them to work to earn an income to sustain their lives" said R5 - a psychosocial worker who works at an NGO which provides psychosocial support to the refugees and asylum seekers.

In this instance, key Informant used the term 'dependent'. In professions like social work, and psychology, it is usually encouraged to help clients get rid of dependency and to lead a more sustainable lifestyle. R5: the psycho-social worker claims that government ban on employment as a constraint to achieve such an objective. On the other hand, the bottom line here is that neither the organization nor other service providers can financially assist these RAS. This was further clear when another respondent R2 said, "In general, X organization (that I work) does not provide financial assistance," R2 is administration officer at a service providing organization. Many other key informants, including the above-mentioned psycho-social worker, suggest that the government should allow them to earn a legitimate income. It is also clear that the state, on the other hand, has used the law to restrict the right of these RAS to engage in an employment, and subsequently denied their right to have a minimum standard of life.

Table 5: Economic hardships and social inequalities

Economic hardships are caused by widespread social inequalities
Right to employment is denied
Lack of resources available for service delivery NGOs
Exclusion from various social services and welfare services as they are non-citizens

RAS are not eligible for many social services or welfare benefits provided by the government as they are only provided to Sri Lankan citizens. They have left their national borders and entered into another country because of the “fear of persecution”, and subsequently they are deprived of the nationality. Since they do not live within ‘their’ national borders, they do not have the right to employment, neither they are eligible for welfare. This situation could be recognized as a situation of social injustice and the denial of their basic human dignity and needs. Sri Lankan state, United Nations, and other service providers fail to address this issue in a substantial, and satisfactory manner.

4.4. Employment

Engaging in an employment is prohibited for RAS in Sri Lanka. At least, they cannot be self-employed and cannot legally engage in any form of income generation activity within the borders of Sri Lanka.

But they may be engaged in minor jobs informally and illegally due to their extreme poverty. If relevant government authorities find out that they are employed, that will result the end of their refugee process and they will be deported back to their countries where they could be subjected for further persecution. If they are employed, because of their illegal status, they could be exploited in their employment in many ways. In addition they are also not eligible for social security benefits such as ETF, EPF, and insurance. In a case of a physical accident and damage during an employment, they may face further crisis. Women, children and other vulnerable sub-groups could face further difficult situation in such a context.

Respondent R2 stated that there are various workers, and professionals among RAS and they can be employed in areas where there is a shortage of labour in Sri Lanka. He argued that both Sri Lankan state and the RAS could benefit from this strategy. Many other key informants also suggested that they should be legally allowed to work in self-employment and other fields.

Respondent R4 said that even service delivery organizations are "afraid" to implement (economic) 'empowerment programs' because employing RAS is illegal. This implies that the illegality of employment restricts not only the activities of RAS, but also the interventions made by the government and non-government welfare, social service organizations, activists and social workers who deal with them. While social workers can play a bigger role in advocating with government and other stakeholders to change the policy on illegality of employment, some of them may also understand it as a risky task. As social workers have to work within the limits of the law and policy practices, the may also play oppressive roles as social workers and deprive RAS from the benefits of economic programs and other interventions.

4.5. Food and nutrition

“Food is a right. It’s not a need. Needs comes next, because it is the survival” said R7: a professional social worker. She pointed out that first of all, the person must live, in order to realize other needs. Food is one of the basic human needs. Food is included as a major form of physiological need as the first layer of Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.

> “They can't pay much attention to nutrition of the food, than surviving with some food that they can find for a lower budget. Even if they paid attention (to nutrition), they cannot afford to buy such food” said respondent R3.

Earlier it was discussed how economic hardships limit other needs, including food. This has a direct consequence on nutrition. It was also learned that some families afford to have only one meal a day.

Their culture influences their food patterns. Respect for cultural and other forms identities is one of the key values of social work, R7 the professional social worker said. However, the food they are familiar in their country is expensive in Sri Lanka. As a result, the cultural attachment to food affects the nutritional issues.

> “The vast majority of refugees in Sri Lanka come from countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Their staple food is not rice, but *Chapati* and *Roti*. As the main ingredient of these food, they use *Atta flour* which is more expensive than the average wheat flour in Sri Lanka. Then they widely use buffalo curd as an ingredient. They also use basmati rice. Basmati rice and curd are the more expensive foods in Sri Lanka, although they are cheaper in their countries”. Said respondent R2.

This shows how culture affects the price of their food in this country. As a solution to this problem, a service provider has started conducting training for RAS to teach them how to prepare a local meal at a lower cost. “The majority of RAS in the country are highly educated. They have knowledge about their nutritional needs. So they add greens into their meals that they can buy here (at a lower price)” said a staff member who involves in organizing these trainings. While there may or may not be a link between the level of education and the practice of adding greens for nutrition, the person seems appreciating and promoting the habit of adding greens as a quality of an educated people.

Sometimes, being forced to eat culturally different food for economic reasons could have negative mental health consequences. Even if they manage to prepare a Sri Lankan meal at a lower cost with the training received from the service delivery organization, they still prefer to eat the food that is close to their culture. Especially this condition can affect children.

> “They (police officers) brought food to those who were staying at the Negombo Police (RAS) following the Easter Sunday bomb attack. These kids can't eat spicy food. Those food had chili in them.” Said respondent R7.

This shows that it is very important to protect and respect the cultural existence of an individual, no matter how difficult it may be. Unexpectedly, cultural factors can affect people's mental health, rights, and basic needs.

4.6. Housing and settlements

> "Everybody should have right to housing, but there is no such a policy in our country. In addition, they have to pay for their accommodation with their own money. Usually an entire family lives in a small room as that is the thing they can afford to spend with the little money they have in hand. Sometimes, there are six or seven persons in a family living in a single room. ” said respondent R3.

His statement gives us an insight into the current situation of RAS in Sri Lanka. That is, the amount of money they can spend (their financial capacity) has become a major factor in determining the quality of their housing.

The majority (about 80%) of RAS lives in the Negombo area. The rest live in Colombo and its suburbs. There is a very limited population of RAS in other geographical areas.

> "Negombo is a tourist hotspot so they first find accommodation in resorts in these areas. It's easy for them. Later they find houses in the same area. They have confidence about security because they have a tourist police”. Said R2 explaining why RAS community have concentrated in Negambo area.

According to above statement, it seems they have settled in Negambo for three reasons: (1) comfort in easily finding accommodation, (2) fear of lack of security, and (3) the

assurance of security they feel about the area has made it is a popular place of accommodation for them. Respondent R4 discussed other factors that has led to this.

> "Prices are relatively low compared to Colombo. And there is an established community. They see being close to people of their community as safety. Now there is a lot of Ahmadiyya community in Negambo and there is also an Ahmadiyyan mosque. So I think that's why most of them settle in Negombo. The other main reason for being in Negambo and Colombo is that the two (UNHCR) Implementing Partners are there. So these people are around those places"

Respondent R4's opinion further confirms respondent R2's view that concerns about security and safety has led to the settlement of refugees in Negambo area. In addition he brings a major argument that is much relevant to this focus of this research. He argues that the location of the major service delivery organizations (UNHCR implementing partners) to RAS has led to the concentration of settlement of RAS in Negambo area. Easy access for services and support, religious and cultural factors (location of mosque and people of their community) has led to their settlement.

A small number of people live outside these areas, as a means of reducing the high cost of housing in Negambo and Colombo areas.

> ""Housing in this area is expensive. So over time, they will not be able to afford such a high price and they will move out and find housing in villages outside the area, mainly because they will not be able to pay high rent, as they did in the past. They are motivated by economic inability." said respondent R2.

This shows that their economic incapacity has outweighed their concern for security. R4 describes the situation they face after moving into other areas in search of low-cost housing based on their economic status.

> "There are small groups of them in Kandy, also in Kurunegala. But it is difficult for them to stay in those areas. GS officers do not know who these people are." said respondent R4.

Here he mentions of the unawareness about RAS among government officials. RAS are also required to register with the Grama Niladhari of their area of residence. We could assume even such a process could be affected, ignorance resulted by such unawareness.

R3 explained how he and a group of others had intervened on behalf of an asylum seeker residing in the Kurunegala area who had been arrested for having expired visa. This also highlights the problematic legal status and the lack of proper understanding about RAS among the law enforcement officers.

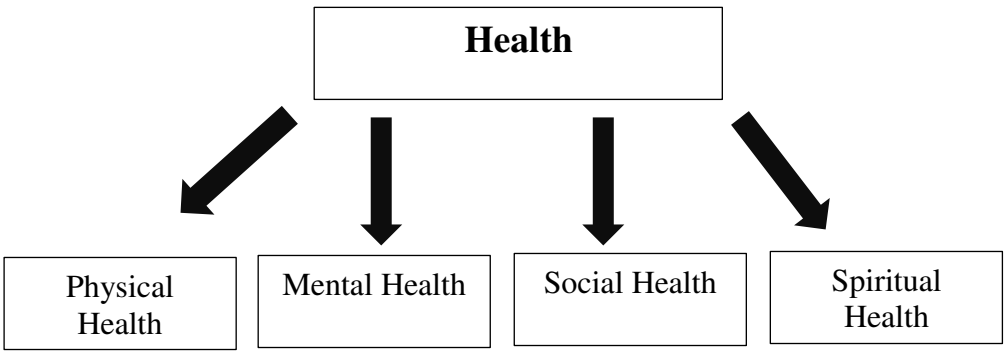
> "These days we are conducting a study with a lawyer on what can be provided at the level of Grama Niladhari (village officers) within their limits. And we have conducted training programs with all Grama Niladharis in Negambo Divisional Secretariat area." Said respondent R2.

This shows that they are working to reduce these problems through awareness and training programs and by doing so, they seek to create a conducive environment for RAS.

4.7. Health

The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (Official Records of WHO, no. 2, p. 100). Thus, perfect health is not just the elimination of disease or disability, but also the physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. Therefore health is not simply the absence of disease or weakness. The areas that should be in full health can be divided into four aspects as physical health, mental health, social health and spiritual health.

Figure 5: Four aspects of Health



Source: Field Data

All the four aspects play a role in the proper functioning of the body and the physical and mental well-being of a person and they are also influenced by other factors such as healthcare, physical environment, social and economic environment, individual behaviours, and genetic makeup.

These RAS are eligible only to receive health facilities from government welfare system in Sri Lanka. Therefore engagement of health officials with RAS is higher compared to other government welfare officers. In addition, UNHCR, UNHCR Implementing Partners and NGOs provide various programs and services to improve the physical and mental health of RAS. There are limitations in Sri Lankan healthcare system, which RAS are also subjected to. While healthcare is provided free of charge, they have to purchase some health drugs with their own expenses. However, due to their poverty, they face more difficulties in managing with such expenses.

4.8.1. Community Health

They are also provided with health camps mostly targeting to improve their community health.

> "We run health camps on things like tuberculosis and malaria control programs. Sri Lanka is a country that has completely eradicated malaria, but these countries still have malaria." Said respondent R1.

This statement clarifies importance of addressing specific community health concerns that may be particular to RAS community. Ignorance of community health of RAS could have a negative impact on local and national health concerns.

Cultural factors may be strongly relevant when it comes to sexual and reproductive health concerns. Sexual health seems a tabooed subject and service providing KIs did not have much knowledge on such a subject. However these unspoken areas of health require more attention of health service providers, and policy makers. Also there may be special health requirements affecting children and adolescents. Maternal health is the only area of health relating to sexual and reproductive health that Key Informants spoke.

4.8.2. Maternal Health

Nutritious food is essential for a person to be in good health. However, their economic status and how it has affected their diet and nutrition were discussed earlier.

> "We have made them aware that one should be registered at MOH or at the maternity clinic in the area when they become pregnant. There they will receive the required immunization and healthcare. The will provide health drugs, and do necessary health tests. In addition, the midwives attend their homes to check them. But after they get registered at the clinic, they will only go back there close to having the baby. That's a weakness with them (RAS). When a baby is born, the paediatric clinic offers weighing, immunization etc. Also these expectant mothers and babies get 'Thriposha' – nutritional supplement" R2

What is special about this service is that could be the only instance that their nutrition has been recognized by the government. 'Triposha' is a nutritional supplement provided free of charge by the GoSL to improve the nutrition of pregnant mothers and infants. Though government offers all the maternal health services to the RAS pregnant mothers, it is important to carefully look at what causes this irregular attendance to the clinics. There may be due to the language and cultural barriers, or any other reason that they restricts them from attending the clinic regularly. Finding out the reason leads to this gap could help to rethink of ways to improve maternal health access to these mothers.

4.8.3. Psychological wellbeing

> Psychological wellbeing has two important facets. The first of these refers to the extent to which people experience positive emotions and feelings of happiness. Sometimes this aspect of psychological wellbeing is referred to as subjective wellbeing (Diener, 2000).

A person's poor mental health is affected by factors such as problems in interpersonal relationships, loss, changes in role, having to make hasty decisions, and violence. These people have fled their homeland in search of asylum due to the incidents of terror, intimidation, risks and threats to their lives. Therefore it is possible that they are survivors of traumatic incidents, and conditions that may have led to the loss of their

relatives and friends. Such trauma they have experienced in the past might have caused psychological conditions such as PTSD and other psychological issues. And their families may be still be stuck in those environments with life risks and trauma. Further even though they have left those traumatic conditions, the problematic socio-economic conditions and uncertainty they face could lead to increased mental pressure and stress in them. In other words, special attention should be paid to their mental health than an average person.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Anxiety disorders, Stress have a major impact on the mental health of these people, said R5, a psychosocial worker working with the community. She also said that, there are more than 30 people suffering from dementia (at present). She also said they received information on three suicide attempts.

> "If their refugee application is rejected, then they have to return home. As a result, many of them feel anxious and insecure, especially asylum seekers" said respondent R5.

This statement shows that there is some uncertainty about the future especially in case of asylum seekers. Refugees have some assurance that they will not be deported back to their homeland, but not the asylum seekers. There is a fear and uncertainty that their application may be rejected and they could have to return to their country.

> "But if they get the right to work, the right to education, the right to housing, the right to health, as I mentioned earlier, the pressure will decrease. This will reduce the risk of depression in these people. [They often worry] How can I feed my elderly mom and dad? How can I send my child to school? Such people have died (committed suicide) because of such things. So, if such problems are solved, the depression of these people will be reduced a lot." Said respondent R3.

In the above statement, R3 speaks about how the economic poverty affects the mental health of individuals. He also says that some people have committed suicide due to this situation. A person who has fled his country for the sake of securing his own life, may even end up taking the very life that he has been attempting to save. Such incidents clearly indicate a deep failure or a grave weakness in the entire system of helping the forced migrants.

Commenting on the lack of dignity, respondent R4 stated:

> "It's normal for you and me, but if you (and me) have to spend time doing nothing for five years or several years, we both also can become mentally ill."

This also shows how unemployment leads to lack of self-worth and dignity, resulting a negative impact on mental well-being of a person. R5 said that these people can get the services of mental health clinics in government hospitals, he also noted that some RAS individuals are using such services. This was also confirmed by other KIs. In addition to the services of mental health clinics in government hospitals, UNHCR and their Implementing Partners also seek to improve their mental well-being through various programs and services.

Psychological need assessment, Group therapy Programmes, Motivation programmes, Art therapy programmes, Case intervention about psychological wellbeing , Relaxation programmes for adults (both men and women), Relaxation programmes for youth, Relaxation programmes for adults children, Individual counselling programmes, Group counselling programmes, Family counselling programmes, Other events to increase their mental satisfaction are some of such programmes conducted by them.

In addition, they can get counselling services at the religious institutions such as Christian churches and Ahmadiyya mosque, R3 said. This also shows that RAS seek the intervention and support of religious institutions for their mental well-being. While such practices may be more culturally closer to them, than the formal counselling centres, they may also have various limitations. Also there can be cultural barriers of certain issues that they are unable to seek psychosocial support.

> “Family issues are not much spoken, because of their cultural barriers. They have dominant family system.” Said respondent R5.

In South Asian countries, especially in Islam countries there are conventional attitudes regarding the family. Also there may be attitudes and concerns that it is not ‘good’ to speak about the family issues to an outsider. Addressing such culturally concealed, sensitive aspects that affect mental and psychological aspects of life requires careful and sensitive interventions in order to improve the quality of life of women, girls and others in the RAS community.

Time to time UNHCR implementing partners organize sport events and other social events, targeting to improve their mental health. However, in general 'entertainment' is too costly for them, at most of the occasions.

> "They have to pay tourist entering charges when they are visiting some leisure places such as Zoo, Nature parks & Museum." Said respondent R5.

This statement indicate how their economic vulnerability restricts their mental health avenues, and how state, and corporate policies of charging them expensive amounts considering them as 'foreigners' has denied opportunities for better mental wellbeing.

4.8.4. Attitudes of healthcare workers

In some cases, negative attitudes of healthcare work have restricted access of RAS to healthcare services. This has been often resulted by the unawareness among the healthcare workers in government hospitals as they are not aware that refugees are entitled to free health services.

> "One of my personal experience is how the medical doctor, and nurses behaved when I went to the National hospital. They don't know at least who the refugees are. They even demanded money. So I have to explain and argue with them a lot" said respondent R4.

He told that while senior officers are aware of the refugee healthcare benefits, general healthcare employees in government hospitals are not aware of these things. Raising awareness among government healthcare workers about the healthcare eligibility of RAS is important to provide them with better access to health services.

4.8. Education

RAS are not eligible for public education in Sri Lanka. However school students are able to enrol in the private international schools if they can afford for the expenses. However due to widespread poverty in the RAS community, this is not a realistic option for RAS children. While UNHCR provides a limited support for primary education of young children, there are many limitations even with regards to it.

> “Earlier we provided support to those who are studying at private schools, but we had to limit certain expenses, as funding we received was reduced. So unfortunately we have to curtail these expenses from education. Even though we have limits, we help the education of children to some extent” said R1: the UNHCR officer.

Curtailing funding to service delivery organizations decide the destiny of children and their futures. While depending on external funding is not a sustainable solution, it is important that UNHCR not only locally, but also internationally take a strong standpoint, and special steps in securing rights of the RAS children as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth." Having no access to education cause serious damages to their careers, and educational path as explained in the below statement.

> “Their education gets stuck. So when they go to another country, they cannot enrol into the classroom appropriate for their age, but to a one with younger students. So these things, not only impact for a temporary period, but their entire life.”

Not being able to afford for education, or not being eligible for education impact their entire life in many ways. Further usually private campuses request for student visa for enrolling in the higher educational courses. Since they do not have student visa, most of them are not eligible to receive such education. These issues require strong advocacy initiatives aiming to change laws affecting RAS community with the involvement of government, policy makers, UNHCR, and other key stakeholders. Also civil society organizations have rarely made international submissions addressing the rights of RAS children. It seems often national borders matter in prioritizing the demands both in case of civil society and the government. On the other hand, limited facilities available for RAS to be organized, makes it difficult to run a strong advocacy campaign for themselves. Also it was said that UNHCR should have taken a more proactive role in pushing for educational rights of children. “As I see they are afraid, that even lose the space they have now” said a respondent.

KIs pointed out that entire number of RAS children in Sri Lanka is around 250. Therefore R3 argued that even providing school education to all the RAS children is not

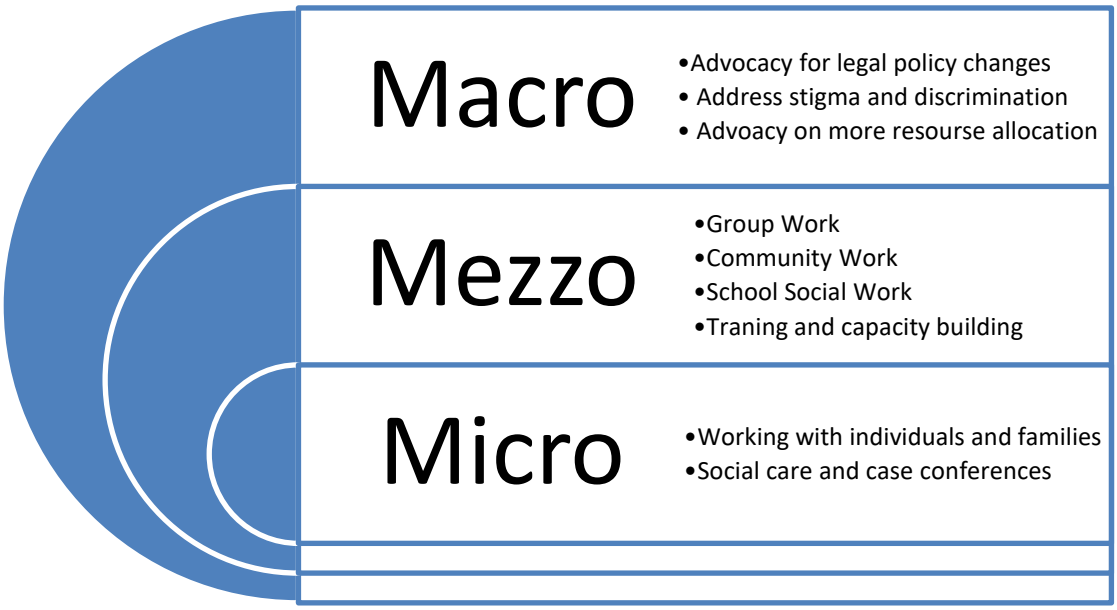
an economic burden for Sri Lankan government. Both R2 and R4 said that Sri Lanka could improve its international recognition by providing support to these children, and R4 argued this as opportunity for making a cultural impact internationally, by sharing our values through our educational system.

4.9. Opportunities in the Social work Practice

> "Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing."
>
> (Global Definition of the Social Work Profession, IFSW, July 2014)

RAS are a community of persons who face number of problems at different levels. Their individual or community problems are not really individual, or community, they are rather resulted by socio-economic and political conditions and widespread inequalities that extend beyond the national borders. Social workers could intervene to address these situations both in the lives of RAS and the political conditions that result in inequality, discrimination and other disadvantages to RAS, taking different roles in different capacities. Social Work can promote social change through advocacy on legal and policy changes focusing on the rights and wellbeing of RAS. It can also empower both refugee community and the Sri Lankan citizens, and help to promote understanding and cohesion between two groups. It can also engage and intervene in the international, national, local and community levels. Foreign refugees in Sri Lanka have rarely received social work support and intervention. Rarely Social Work professionals, social work educational institutions, researchers, and students have worked with RAS in Sri Lanka.

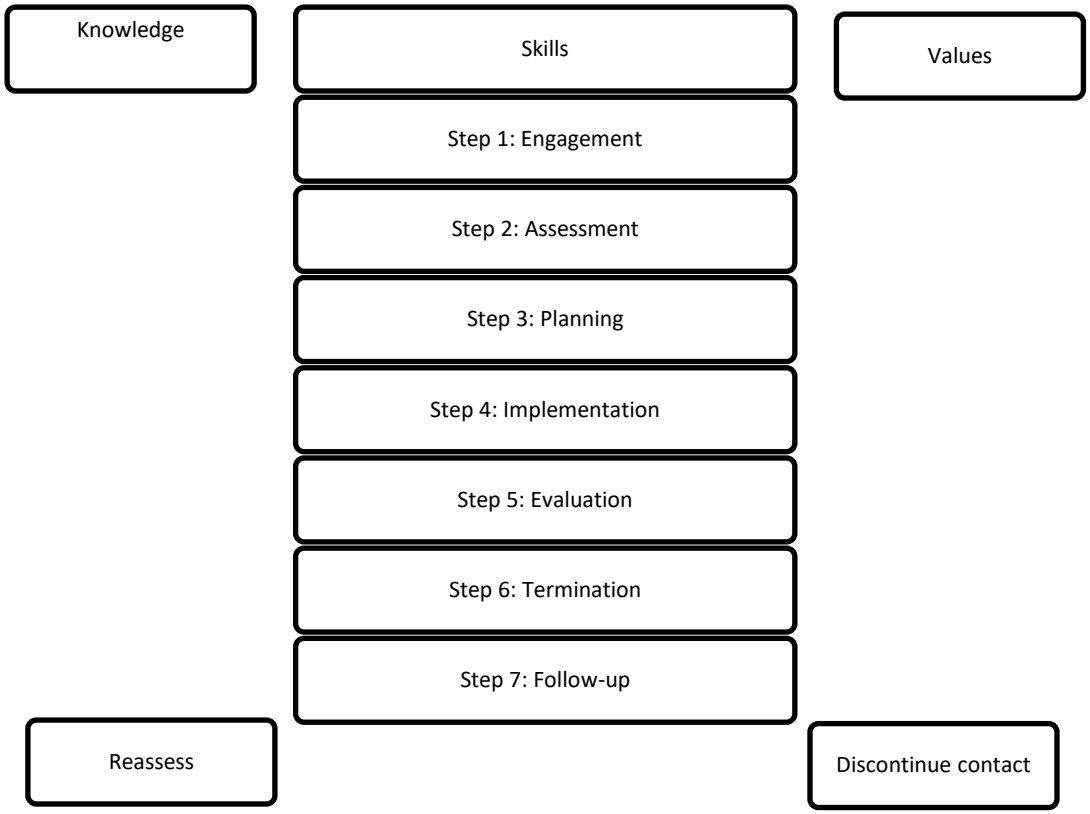
Figure 6: Social Work opportunities at different levels



Social Work with RAS in Sri Lanka is an unexplored topic. Since it was difficult to find a professional Social Worker who has worked with the refugees in the context of Sri Lanka, the researcher conducted one interview with a professional Social Worker with doctoral qualifications who has experience in working with vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka in general. In addition, the researcher attempted to find out the social work opportunities by analysing the experiences of other KIs who are involved in supporting RAS community in Sri Lanka.

Though it is difficult to sum up the range of opportunities for Social Workers could undertake in the work with RAS, I attempt to summarize them in the figure 6. In Social Work, generally interventions are categorized as Micro, Mezzo and Macro. Micro Practice usually involves working with individuals, families. Mezzo Practice usually involves working with groups, organizations and communities. Macro Practice is working with large social systems that involve governments, international community, UN and intergovernmental organizations and their politics, practices, laws and policies.

Figure 7: Planned change steps in generalist intervention model



Based on a figure Kirst-Ashman, K. & Hull, G.H. (2018, p. 3), Introduction to Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities

Figure 6 provides General steps in Social Work interventions. While there are different approaches to social work, Generalist Practice presents a general theory about Social Work. Usually most of the Social Work interventions in micro, mezzo and macro practice involve above 7 steps in general. Social Work is practice based profession that consist three components: (1) knowledge, (2) Skills and (3) values. Knowledge may include fields of practice, theories such as systems theory, ecological perspective and Curriculum content areas. Skills include common generalist skills, and skills specific to Micro, Mezzo and Macro levels. Values include Professional Ethics and Identification of personal values. A social Worker helps clients to evaluate and recognize their problems, identify their needs and prioritize them, to recognize possible solutions, set goals, specify and implement action steps, to evaluate the actions they have taken. Social Workers empower service users to find solutions within themselves in the micro practice, they also help clients to deal with mezzo and macro level, and work with clients, communities and institutions to bring social change and empowerment.

4.10.1. Working with individuals and families

There are many problems that they face in meeting the basic needs. Poverty, and shortage of economic and non-economic resources is a major issue. As explained previously there is a clear link between poverty and mental health issues and other issues they face.

> "There are short term needs such as enrolment into schools, to get medicine, to get food" said respondent R3.

These seems simple tasks. Due to systematic and structural issues RAS face, these simple things are not that simple. Often they face difficulties in fulfilling these tasks.

Another major area of social work could address is psycho-social intervention and mental health related issues that are not adequately addressed in the existing systems. KIs pointed out that they may have family problems that may be unspoken to service delivery organizations, due to various reasons including socio cultural and linguistic issues.

Though UNHCR with its implementation partners have started addressing these issues, limited resources are available. Professionally trained Social Workers have been rarely employed in this work.

Though RAS individuals are eligible to receive health facilities through government hospitals, they have faced number of issues in accessing services, including hostile and unwelcoming attitudes of employees. Local organizations and volunteer groups could support RAS, by accompanying them and providing other support including community level, and institutional level awareness raising about RAS.

Situation of vulnerable sub-communities within RAS community such as children and young persons, women, LGBTIQ+ persons, persons with living with mental illnesses, disabled persons remain unexplored. Social Workers focus on micro and mezzo level practice could help to solve these issues.

4.10.2. Community Work

Community organization and empowerment of RAS community is very important in the advocating for their rights. It is difficult to talk about community organization, when the community struggles hard to survive day today life, not knowing how manage with the food for next day. Below statement exemplifies this situation.

> "They have some community leaders within them…. They should try being organized more than that. But I see, that is practically difficult. They are both mentally and physically troubled. Some don't have food. Some do not know how to manage with expenses of medicine for their parents. One is unable to send their child to school. Someone living in such a situation cannot afford to be organized. But it is important they try" said respondent R3.

However, being organized could be an important step in the achievement of their rights. Social Workers in collaboration with NGOS, civil society and service delivery organizations could attempt to facilitate these challenges, and help them to be more organized as a community.

Further it is important that social workers help local communities and RAS to develop and strengthen understanding and social cohesion with each other. It is important that social workers work with community members and community leaders such as religious leaders and GS officers to bridge the gaps and foster understanding, and end suspicion towards the refugees. Though community in Negambo has been generally friendly towards RAS, incidents like expelling refugees from houses aftermath of Easter Sunday Bomb attack reveals importance of working long term to create understanding between the communities. Also it is important to work with local schools, educational institutes, and cooperate companies in order to build a local support system for RAS. A Key Informant also revealed how cross-cultural interaction could benefit each other by sharing food cultures, and respect for cultural diversity.

> "They are not eligible for many of the social services provided by the government. However, they should be able to get for social services such as spectacles, dry food rations, wheelchairs provided by groups such as Lions Club. But I am not sure, those organizations are aware of refugees. The organizations

working with refugees can reach to such organizations and intervene get such services" said a government welfare officer.

This statement shows that there can be local charities and social service organizations who might assist the refugees with material benefits and social services. Social workers and organizations could easily intervene to build these connections between such organizations and RAS community.

Also important to recognize the cultural identities and diversity of RAS in the welfare and service delivery processes. They may come from different cultural backgrounds, have different cultural values from Sri Lanka. Their food patterns, nutrition, mental and physical health, and other aspects of life may be strongly connected to these identities. Social Workers can intervene to assess how existing services have been sensitive to their cultural practices and cultural diversity. Social work interventions can be more productive when taken an approach with cultural sensitivity. Also it is important that social workers foster understanding between communities including cultural sharing.

4.10.3. Advocacy

As previously discussed, the legal status of refugees restricts their basic needs in many ways. Not having right to work has resulted number of issues in their access to basic needs. They also are not eligible to open a bank account. This brings a considerable challenge for management of their expenses, and also makes them vulnerable to issues such as theft, accidental loss of money. Therefore advocacy is important to improve their legal status and to recognize their right to work.

It is important to sensitize mass media and journalists, to report on the issues faced by RAS community and to portray realistic, unbiased picture about RAS.

It is also important that more resources are allocated for the welfare of RAS. Limited number of services are provided by existing organizations on welfare of the refugees. While providing welfare and social services is not a sustainable solution, it is important to provide them while advocating with the government for a more sustainable solution.

Advocacy attempts are not always direct demands from the government or authorities. There are also creative ways of advocating for them in creative approaches.

> "We also help the health sector. Last year, we repaired and newly painted two wards in Negambo hospital. Painting the wards was done by the refugees and asylum seekers (RAS). We only provided material and paints to the RAS. In addition, we have granted medical equipment, and other materials for Negambo hospital for the contribution they make on behalf of the RAS." Said R1: an officer of UNHCR.

This also is an example of the principle burden shared by the respondent 4. Burden sharing is the principle that while one stakeholder provides the support for RAS, other stakeholders contribute by sharing the economic burden of it. In encouraging Sri Lankan government for providing facilities for RAS, principle of burden sharing could be very effective. It also highlights the importance of thinking creatively about the advocacy and bringing together the RAS.

Social Workers should find ways to tell positive and inspiring stories about RAS, and their contribution to local communities. Such an approach could help for longer term sustainable solutions. However, it should be again noted that such interventions might be more difficult for RAS community members as they struggle with daily problems about their survival.

4.10.4. Social work research and education

> "No higher educational institutes or another institution has included about refugees in their curriculum. I do not know whether Social Work Institutes teach about refugees in Sri Lanka" said R2: an administrator of service delivery organization to RAS.

He is correct. Higher educational institutes and their curriculums have almost completely ignored the RAS in Sri Lanka. There have been very limited or no academic research about RAS in the context of Sri Lanka. Social work curriculums should consider including knowledge about RAS. Working with RAS could definitely open up international and transnational social work opportunities for Sri Lankan social work students. It will be also helpful to enrich cross-cultural understanding and develop knowledge in things like multi-culturalism beyond the national borders.

Also further research should be conducted on areas such as nutrition, mental health, legal and policy issues affecting RAS.

4.10. Chapter summary

This chapter includes profile of respondents, an overview of service delivery organizations, and description of the situation on themes on welfare including existing service delivery provision, economic conditions, employment, food and nutrition, housing, health, education. It also presents the possible social work opportunities in the field of RAS in Sri Lanka.

Introduction section present the Profile of the respondents: brief overview of the characteristics of the Key informants, including their organizational and professional background, gender and level of education. It also includes a table that presents a summary of themes and subthemes discussed in the chapter.

Then a brief overview is provided on the service delivery organizations and their services. Then the interconnection between the basic needs and their economic status was discussed. The vulnerable economic conditions of RAS also result negative consequences in range of other areas in their life, denying them a minimum standard of quality of life in many ways. It was also looked at what sources of income they have, their dependency on social welfare and social services to a larger extent, and its underlying link with deep social inequalities.

Denial of legal rights for employment is one of the major reasons that denies their self-empowerment and economic capacity. If they engage in an employment in Sri Lanka, it is illegal. It also has the risk of ending their asylum application, and deporting them back to their own country. Many key informants pointed out that if their right to work can be recognized, many other problems can be solved. Therefore advocacy for right to employment is much necessary for a right based social work approach that includes RAS.

Right based social work approach sees food as a right. Food has a direct connection with the nutrition. Food is also connected with the culture. However, ingredients for food in the home country of the majority of RAS are expensive in Sri Lanka. Service delivery organizations provide training on how to prepare local food with a lower cost. Also according to the social work values, we need to respect for cultural identities of people, be sensitive to their cultural aspects. Especially change of food patterns could affect

children very differently. Social workers require to pay more attention to these aspects while working on these issues.

When it comes to housing, lack of space in houses was a major concern. The refugee community settlement is generally concentrated into Negambo area. Community support, service delivery and other conditions led has RAS to settle down in Negambo area.

When it comes to health, uncertainty about leads to issues of mental wellbeing especially among asylum seekers. A psychosocial worker stated that PTSD and other trauma related issues are high among the RAS. There are also suicide attempts having been reported. Therefore psycho-social interventions require more attention in the work with RAS. RAS community is generally eligible for government health services. However, there are practical limitations in accessing such services. They are provided with community health camps and other services by UNHCR Implementing Partners. Despite of the fact that they are also provided with maternal Health services, there is irregular attendance to health clinics.

RAS are not eligible for public education. Their economic difficulties make it difficult for them to access educational opportunism. There are also other issues such as not having student visa for entry into private universities. Though they can enter into international schools, economic poverty often deny them of these opportunities. Though UNHCR has provided support for school tuition fee earlier, now their funding has been limited. However, limited support is still provided for some children.

There are number of social work opportunities to work with RAS at micro, mezzo and macro levels. These include working with individuals and families, community work, advocacy social work research and education. RAS require practical assistance for fulfilling their basic needs. Case work, psychosocial interventions and community organization could help them to some extent. However, a strong advocacy attempts are needed since they are denied of right to work, right to education and many other basic needs relating to their life. Another major gap is that lack of involvement of social workers and social work academics and students in the work of RAS in Sri Lanka.

5. Conclusion

Refugees and asylum seekers (RAS) living in Sri Lanka face various difficulties including legal, economic and socio-cultural barriers. When looked at the social services and welfare for RAS, they are mainly provided through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Non-Governmental Organizations. This study primarily looked at how RAS manage the needs in their day today life with limited services they receive. It also tried to find out opportunities for social work professionals to intervene in their needs and to address the lack of knowledge in the field of Sri Lankan social work about RAS in Sri Lanka.

5.1. Significance of the study

Much of research has been done on RAS and social work with them, mainly in the signatory countries to the refugee convention, where refugees are eligible for permanent relocation. In non-signatory countries such as Sri Lanka, where there are issues regarding the legal acceptance of RAS, only a limited amount of research has been done on them. Of these, research on social work with them is even more limited. Studies on RAS in Sri Lanka has been further limited. Subsequently, there has been very limited knowledge on RAS in Sri Lankan context. This research will make an important contribution to fill that gap. Also limited Sri Lankan social work research has used Anti-Oppressive social work Practice (AOP) as a theoretical framework which this study uses. AOP is an important theoretical approach in Social Work to deal with the vulnerable communities such as RAS, and issues of social injustice, which requires more attention of Sri Lankan Social Workers.

This research will also help service delivery organizations in the government, non-government and intergovernmental sectors supporting RAS to reassess the quality of their services and to make necessary changes in their practice, and advocacy approaches. Since this is an exploratory study, this could be a useful study for many future researchers, as an initial assessment on the situation of the refugees.

5.2. Research findings

Sri Lanka has not yet signed the International Refugee Convention of 1951. Therefore, Sri Lanka does not provide permanent or long term residence to refugees. Refugees arriving in Sri Lanka temporarily live in Sri Lanka, until they obtain a third country for permanent relocation. This process usually takes several years. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between UNHCR and GoSL in 2006 provided the legal basis for this process.

About 80% of the RAS in Sri Lanka are located in the Negombo area. As a tourist destination, this settlement is facilitated by the availability of accommodation, security, community support and the location of service providers in the area.

Health care is currently the only welfare service available to RAS. In addition, UNHCR and their affiliates provide services to food and housing, community and mental health, education, and vocational training.

Limited resource has been allocated for the benefit of RAS, causing a direct negative impact on their quality of life. Those limited resources are provided mainly through the government, UNHCR, NGOs, religious and charitable organizations. The reduced quality of limited resources are also impacted by ignorance, carelessness, and social exclusion of refugees.

In general, both RAS suffer from economic poverty. The loss of their right to an employment exacerbates this situation of poverty. Economic problems also create many other problems in areas such as health, education, and nutrition. One good example is that stress caused by other economic problems that can have a negative impact on mental health.

Refugees after being recognized as the ‘refugees’ in the UNHCR asylum seeking process are eligible for more service allocation. For example, UNHCR Economic Allowance is only available to refugees. Asylum seekers also face ‘uncertainty of future’ which leads to more psychological pressure, as their asylum claim could either be accepted or rejected. As a result, asylum seekers become more vulnerable than the refugees in several ways.

RAS children are not eligible for public education, resulting disruption of education in a majority of children, causing lifelong damages to their career and education. Limited support currently provided is not sufficient. This requires special attention of the policy makers and the child rights advocates.

The knowledge, awareness and attitudes of government officers regarding RAS affect the quality of their life and challenges and risks they face. For example, while there are no reports of arrests of refugees for alleged visa expiry in the Negombo area, I got to know of an incident that a refugee in Kurunegala has been arrested. This incident has occurred due to lack of awareness about RAS among the public officers, especially outside the areas that RAS usually live. However, in a similar case, a service provider had to intervene after a Colombo hospital refused to provide free health services to a refugee. Such incidents indicate lack awareness about RAS, their legal status, and services they are eligible is not limited to a specific geographical location.

Language barriers not only restrict their access to services, but also everyday life interactions. The lack of proper communication between the service providers and RAS clients can result lack of quality in services. UNHCR implementing partners conduct Sinhala and English language classes for them, as a means of minimizing this situation. Also there are informal and weak community support systems that could be further strengthened to minimize such incidents.

The difference between their culture and the culture Sri Lanka affect their quality of life. For example, RAS could be subjected to nutrition and other problems as their regular food ingredients are expensive in Sri Lanka. They are currently provided trainings such as how to prepare a local meal at a low cost. However, there can be many other unaddressed similar problems attached to culture. For example areas such as sexual and reproductive health, issues of women might have cultural barriers.

RAS are prevented from legally engaging in an employment in Sri Lanka, including self-employment, resulting their sole dependency on the welfare and help from others. This brings significant challenges to the economic empowerment of the RAS. Even service providers are reluctant to provide support for economic empowerment due to legal restrictions. Changing this situation requires changes in laws and policies, which require strong advocacy attempts.

The involvement of social work professionals with RAS in Sri Lanka is low. Also less research has been conducted on RAS, resulting lack of knowledge about RAS in Sri Lankan academia in general, including social work. In addition curriculums have also ignored RAS.

5.3. Recommendations

Service delivery organizations need to pay more attention to the development of the economic potential of RAS, and the advocacy on right to employment. Economic vulnerability and other issues of RAS are inherently linked to their exclusion from the right to employment. Advocacy should focus on influencing policy makers to allow them to work at least in the limited fields of employment. Many of their psychological and other problems can be remedied if their economic problems are properly addressed. A program should be formulated to effectively utilize the knowledge of the professionals among RAS for the development of Sri Lanka.

The right to education of school age children should be guaranteed to ensure the right to education of children. More attention should also be paid to their mental health. Children require special attention of policy makers and service providers and they should receive additional care.

Social workers can work on with RAS at Micro, Mezzo and Macro levels, taking different roles. It is important that Social Workers take a holistic approach to the problems of RAS, by looking at issues they face at different levels. Advocacy for a rights-based-approach and influencing policy makers carry much importance.

Issues of RAS can be included in Sri Lanka Social Work, other social science, and school curriculums. Social workers and academic institutions could play a proactive role in supporting RAS rights. Also social work students can work with RAS in their field practice, gaining knowledge and skills to work with cross-cultural, trans-national clients, acquiring unique experiences.

Raising awareness and strengthening sensitivity towards RAS among general public is also important, in creating a health surrounding for RAS in Sri Lanka. Opportunities should be explored about the possibilities of inclusion of RAS in social welfare and social service opportunities that are only available to Sri Lankan citizens at the present.

5.4. Limitations and Further research

This situational assessment only provides an initial assessment of the situation of the RAS mainly focusing on their basic needs, and available social welfare and social services. Since this is an unexplored area, many future research could be conducted about RAS in Sri Lanka. There are also a number of broader political, economic, and global factors that contribute to the situation of refugees. Often research into RAS addresses transnational issues. However, this study largely focuses the Sri Lankan context.

Also RAS were not interviewed in this study for practical reasons. The findings of this study were mainly based on the information received from the key informants. Future research must include the voices of RAS community and represent their views.

As found in this study, there are number of areas which require more attention of the future researchers. Research into Mental health of RAS in Sri Lanka will help to understand specific mental health concerns affecting RAS and identify ways to address such concerns. Social work as well as Anthropology and ethnographic research could focus on the culture of RAS in Sri Lanka, and their contribution and impact on the culture of Sri Lanka, and how RAS community members experience the cultural shifts.

Also it is important to conduct legal and policy research into the legal status of RAS in Sri Lanka and situation of non-signatory countries of the refugee convention of 1951. Such a study could further assess the legal situation, and identify the opportunities for legal and policy advocacy for gaining rights, enhancing the situation of the RAS in Sri Lanka.

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Annexes

Annexes - 01

Guideline for Interviews - Key informant interviews

1. Introduction about key informer

- Name
- Organization
- Education background
- Specialized area
- Experience of the field
- Specific area in work with refugees and asylum seekers

2. Introduction about organization

- Name
- How long they are working with refugees and Asylum seekers
- Do they work with other communities?

3. What are the main programs/ projects/ events/ welfare services doing with refugees and Asylum seekers?

- What are the other programmes/ services they are doing with refugees and Asylum Seekers?

4. What are the involvement / participation of the informant in those programs?

(E.g.: Law, Human Rights, case intervention, group intervention, community intervention etc.)

5. What is your general opinion about refugees and refugees in Sri Lanka?
(Quality of life, problems, needs)

6. What welfare services do you / your organization provide to refugees and Asylum Seekers?

(Economic assistance, Nutrition, Education, Health, Safety and Housing etc.)

7. What are the major issues / needs faced by refugees and refugees in Sri Lanka According to your knowledge?

8. What are the limitations/ barriers /challenges faced by refugees and Asylum seekers in fulfilling minimum standard of life According to your knowledge?

9. What are the areas where we need to pay more attention to refugees and asylum seekers According to your understand?

10. What other areas do you think should be considered in addition to the services currently provided?

11. What kind of methods we can use when it comes to welfare and welfare delivery? According to your understand and knowledge, (Like Self- Help groups)

12. How asocial welfare providers can assist them?

13. How can social workers intervene with refugees and Asylum seekers?

- In general
- In welfare delivery
-

14. Do you have any other Details Apart from above details, opinions?

15. What are your suggestions for improving the lives of refugees and refugees?

- In general
- In Welfare service delivery

Annexes – 02

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සීදුව.

Consent Form for oral interview

This study is being conducted by myself, Mohamad Safras Asis- a final year student reading for Bachelor of Social Work Degree at National Institute Social Development (NISD), Seeduwa. It is a part of the undergraduate dissertation conducted under the supervision of Lecturer, Mrs. Ishari Gunaratne. The topic of this study is "Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Sri Lanka: a Situational Analysis on welfare service delivery."

NISD is recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) as a degree awarding Institute, under section 25A of the Universities Act No.16 of 1978, and it is a statutory body functioning under the purview of the Ministry of Finance, State Ministry of Samurdhi, Home Economy, Microfinance, Self-Employment, Enterprises Development and Development of Underutilized State Resources.

This semi-structured interview will take around 40-60 minutes. It will or will not be audio-recorded based on your choice. It is also your choice to decide whether or not to mention identifying details about you and your organization.

You could refuse to answer any question/ information that I ask. You could also withdraw from the interview at any given point during the interview. Your participation in this study should be entirely voluntary. You will not have any direct benefits by participating in this study. However, this research may contribute to long term changes in welfare policies affecting refugees in Sri Lanka.

I will take maximum steps to ensure confidentiality of the information provided during the interview. This interview will only be used for my research purposes. If it is audio-recorded, it will be stored securely in my personal computer. A secure password is also used, so that no one involved in the research can access it. All digital files will be stored in the researcher's personal computer. Physical copies of the information will be stored in locked cabinets with limited access. This research is an independent project and is not conducted in collaboration with any governmental or non-governmental organization in or outside Sri Lanka. The information you provide will never be shared with government, inter-governmental or non-governmental authorities, institutions, individuals or any other outsider.

The study and its methodology have been approved by the NISD. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, you may contact my advisor at the National Institute of Social Development, Mrs. Ishari Gunaratne at 011-2882506/7 and udeshi_gunarathna@yahoo.com

If you have any further questions or unclear details regarding the study, you may ask and clarify now, without hesitation.

Also, if you wish to participate in this interview, I request you to mark whether you agree or disagree with the following choices, by cutting out the unnecessary words.

I will give / will not give approval for the interview.

I do not give / approve the recording of the interview.

If the dissertation requires, I do approve/ do not approve of mentioning identifying details about me.

If the dissertation requires, I will give / will not give permission to mention the name of institution.

Signature of the interviewer ..... Date.....

Signature of the interviewee ..... Date.....